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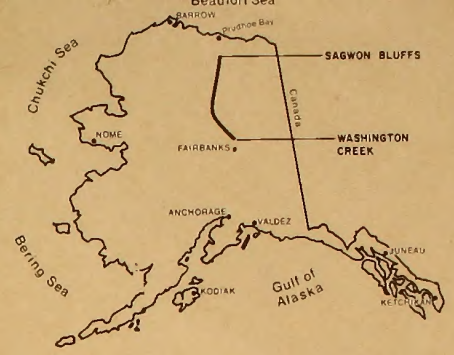
The Utility Corridor



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March 1, 1980

Land Use Decisions

Washington Creek to Sagwon Bluffs

Prepared in coordination and cooperation with

STATE OF ALASKA
NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH
FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Fairbanks District Office
Fairbanks, Alaska

Introduction

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Camp at Atigun during construction of the Trans Alaska Pipeline

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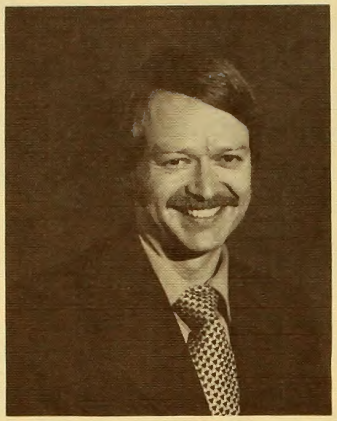

Carl D. Johnson

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

March 1, 1980

Land use planning is the groundwork on which all Bureau of Land Management activities are based. Without a well defined plan for the management and use of the public lands, coordinated, multiple use objectives cannot be met.

The Utility Corridor Land Use Plan has been in the planning stages since 1972. During these many years, sweeping changes have occurred which have changed the direction of the planning effort--a highway to the Arctic Ocean, an oil pipeline, a proposed gas pipeline and the always variable effect of economic, political and public demands. But the goal of the planning effort has remained unchanged--to provide a comprehensive multiple use plan responsive to all Alaskans with respect for the local resident. I believe that this objective has been met.

As the reader studies this document, particular attention should be placed on the sections explaining the land use planning system and the glossary which explains the language of the planners. It must be emphasized that this document is only a summary of the much more detailed Management Framework Plan available for public review at the Fairbanks District Office. The full record of the public involvement and the planning documents and maps are also available.

Carl D Johnson

Carl D. Johnson
Fairbanks District Manager

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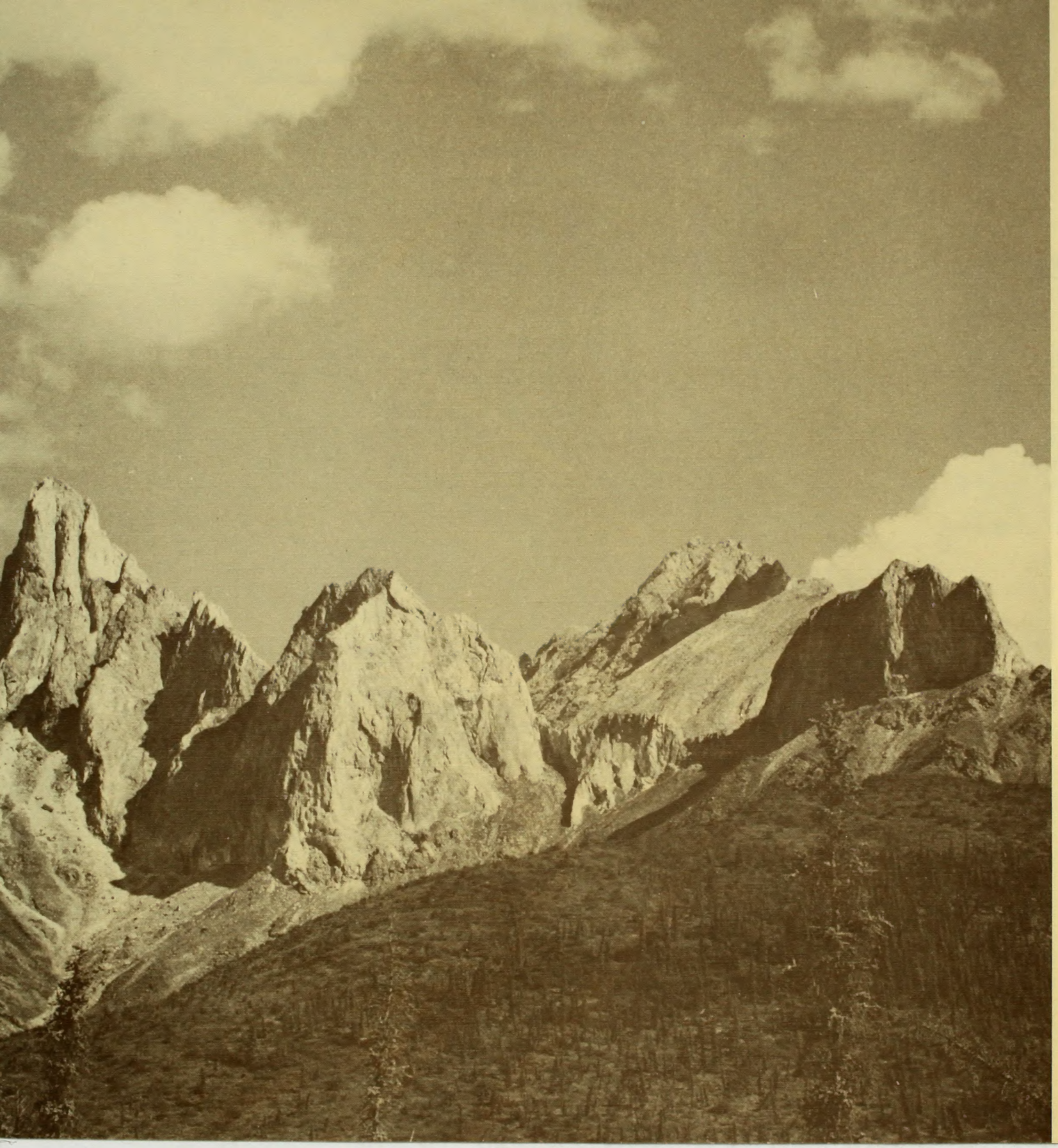
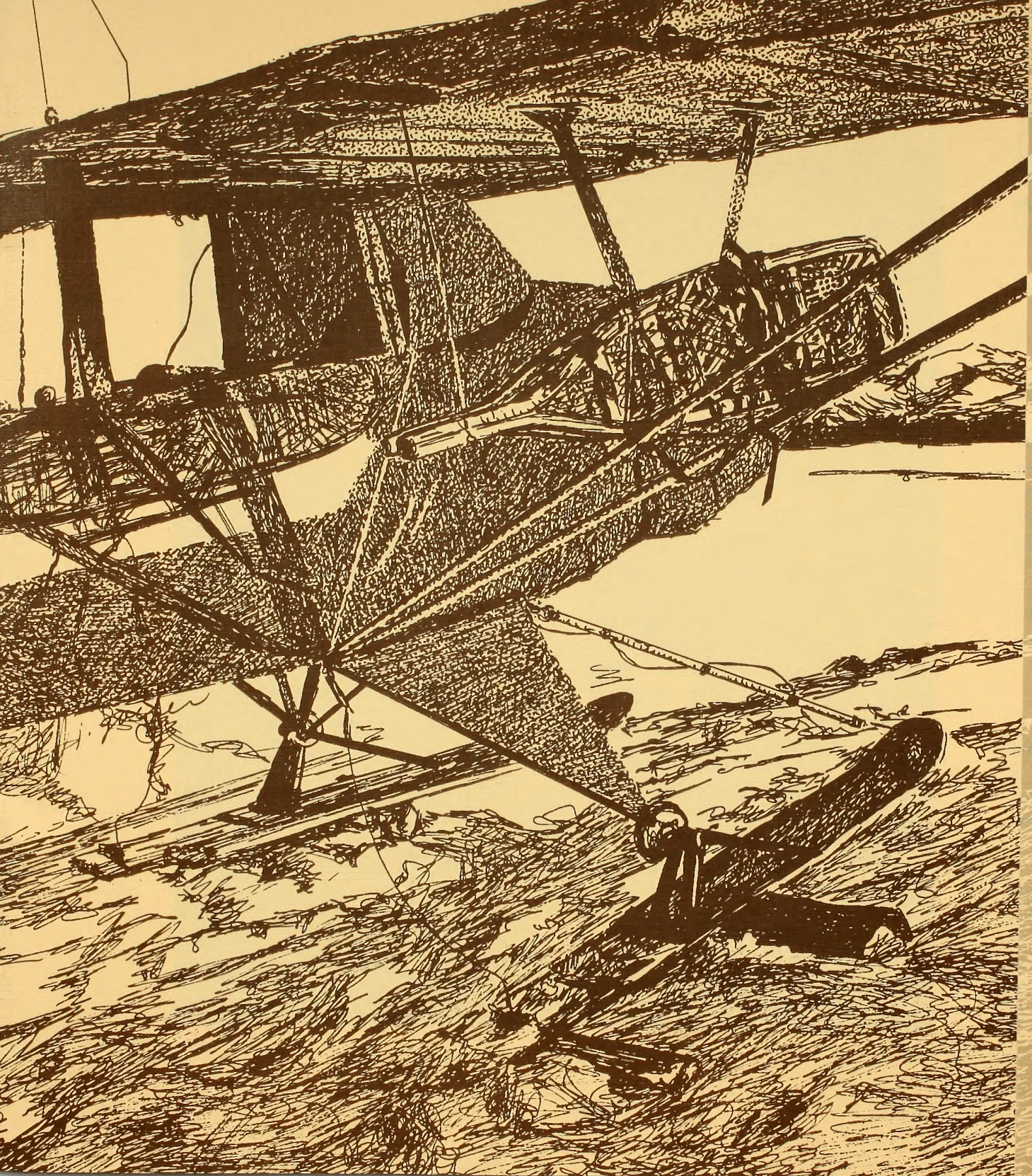


Rugged mountains in the Dietrich area

Contents

Introduction 1
Glossary 7
General Description 13
Major Issues and Conditions 17
- State and Federal Policies on the Corridor 18
- Facility Development 19
- Wilderness 19
- Coordination of Planning 19

Land 21
Minerals 27
Forest Products 31
Range 33
Watershed 35
Wildlife 39
Recreation 43
Cumulative Environmental Overview 49
Interrelationship With Other Plans 51
Action After the Management Framework Plan 53
Acknowledgements 55
Maps 12,56
Charts 10,11,15



Glossary

As in most systems, BLM's Planning System has its own "language". This glossary is included to help you understand some of the terms used in this brochure. Key numbers in parentheses after place names in the text, refer to locations on the Corridor map.

Activity Plan: Detailed action plans for specific program activities.

Management Framework Plan (MFP): A land use decision document which establishes, for a given planning area, projected land uses, and management objectives to meet identified public needs. It is the Bureau's Land Use Plan. It is prepared in three steps: 1.) Resource Recommendations. 2.) Impact Analysis and Multiple Use Recommendation Development. 3.) Decision.

Multiple Use: Management of land and its various resource values so that it is used in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people.

Planning Area: One or more planning units for which an MFP is to be prepared. In this land use plan, the terms Utility Corridor, Corridor, planning unit, and planning area refer to the same tract of public land.

Planning Area Analysis: A document that analyzes present and future needs and demands of the public for land, and for renewable and non-renewable resources. It shows the significance of BLM land within a planning area to uses, operators, the community and region. It is based on data in the URA and other regional information.

Planning Unit: A portion of a BLM District used for assembling resource inventory data. For each planning unit the District Manager prepares a Unit Resource Analysis.

Unit Resource Analysis (URA): A basic source of information on the land and its resources, consisting of: a base map showing roads, rivers, villages, and prominent landmarks; a physical profile describing the physical, biological, and man-made environment; an analysis of present uses, problems, resources conditions and capability; and an identification of specific opportunities which are possible for resolving problems, enhancing resources, and for filling the public's need for land, minerals, recreation, wildlife, watershed, forest products and grazing.

Use Authorization: A document showing permission to use land or its resources.

Visual Resource Management (VRM) Classes:

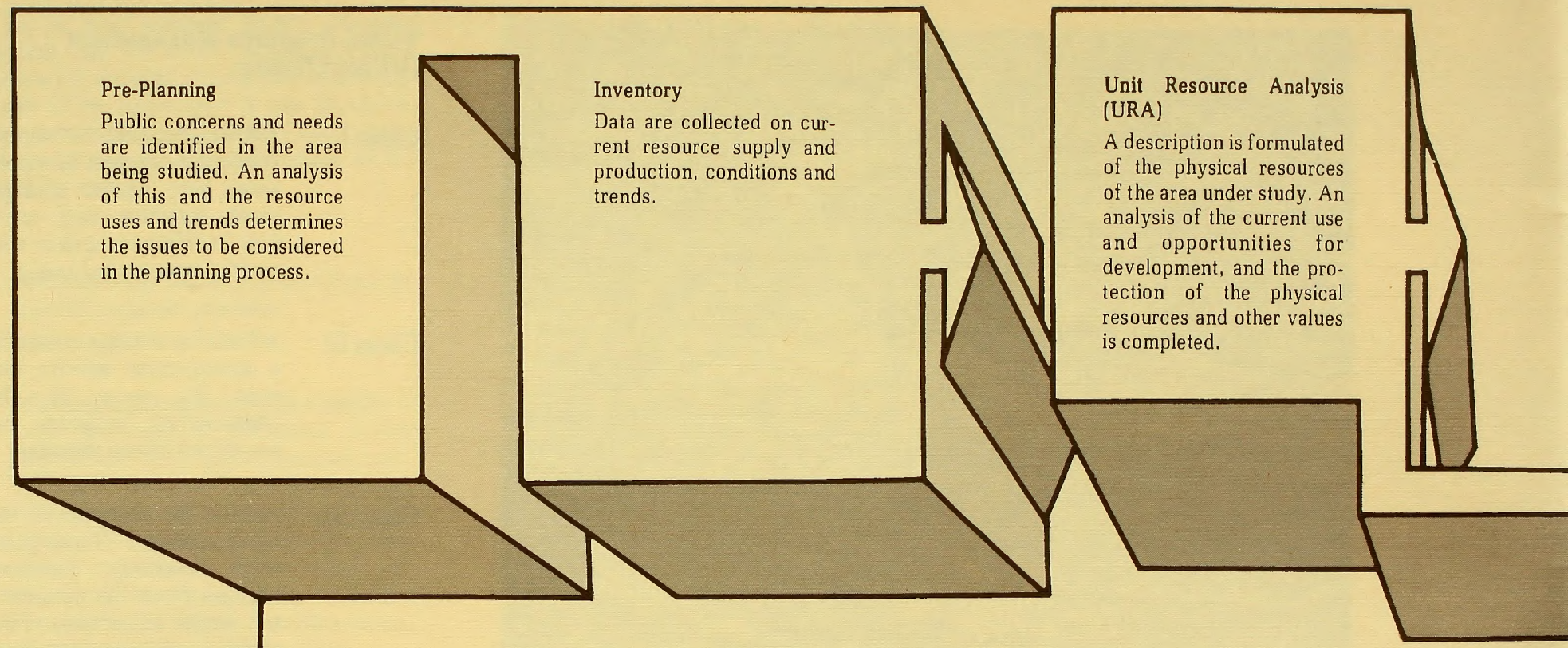
Class I: Allows primarily for natural ecological changes; however, some very limited management activities may occur (i.e., wilderness areas, wild rivers, some natural areas).

Class II: Allows for changes caused by a management activity that may be seen in the characteristic landscape but should not attract attention.

Class III: Allows for changes to the basic elements (form, line, color, texture); however, changes should not dominate, but remain subordinate to the existing characteristic landscape.

Class IV: Allows for changes to occur that may dominate the landscape in terms of scale, but they should be designed to simulate natural occurrences.

Class V: Applies to areas where existing visual intrusions need to be rehabilitated to bring it back into character with the surrounding landscape.



The Bureau of Land Management has been developing and improving the land use planning system for public lands for many years. The present system is explained graphically by the accompanying chart and in the culmination of the refinements based on experience and public desires. It essentially involves the gathering of resource data, the analysis of that data, the formulation of land use recommendations and the decisions based on the recommendations and public involvement.

In Alaska, very few areas actually have completed management framework plans, but several are currently in various stages of completion. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 has placed increased emphasis on the inventory, public involvement and interagency and intergovernmental coordination. It is, therefore, essential that these plans be completed and be compatible with the plans of the local and state governments and other federal agencies. It also requires that plans be updated and revised on a regular basis as conditions change and new information becomes available.

Complete MFP's may be examined in the appropriate BLM field office. District and area planning staff are available to discuss specific areas of the planning process and to explain the decisions made.

Management Framework Plan

Step 1

Resource recommendations related to demand projections and which are constrained by social, economic and policy factors are developed. Alternatives for achieving objectives are identified.

Step 2

Economic, social, institutional and environmental impacts of resource recommendations are analyzed. Included are reconciliation and coordination of competing recommendations along with those contained in state or local land use plans. Alternatives may be proposed.

Step 3

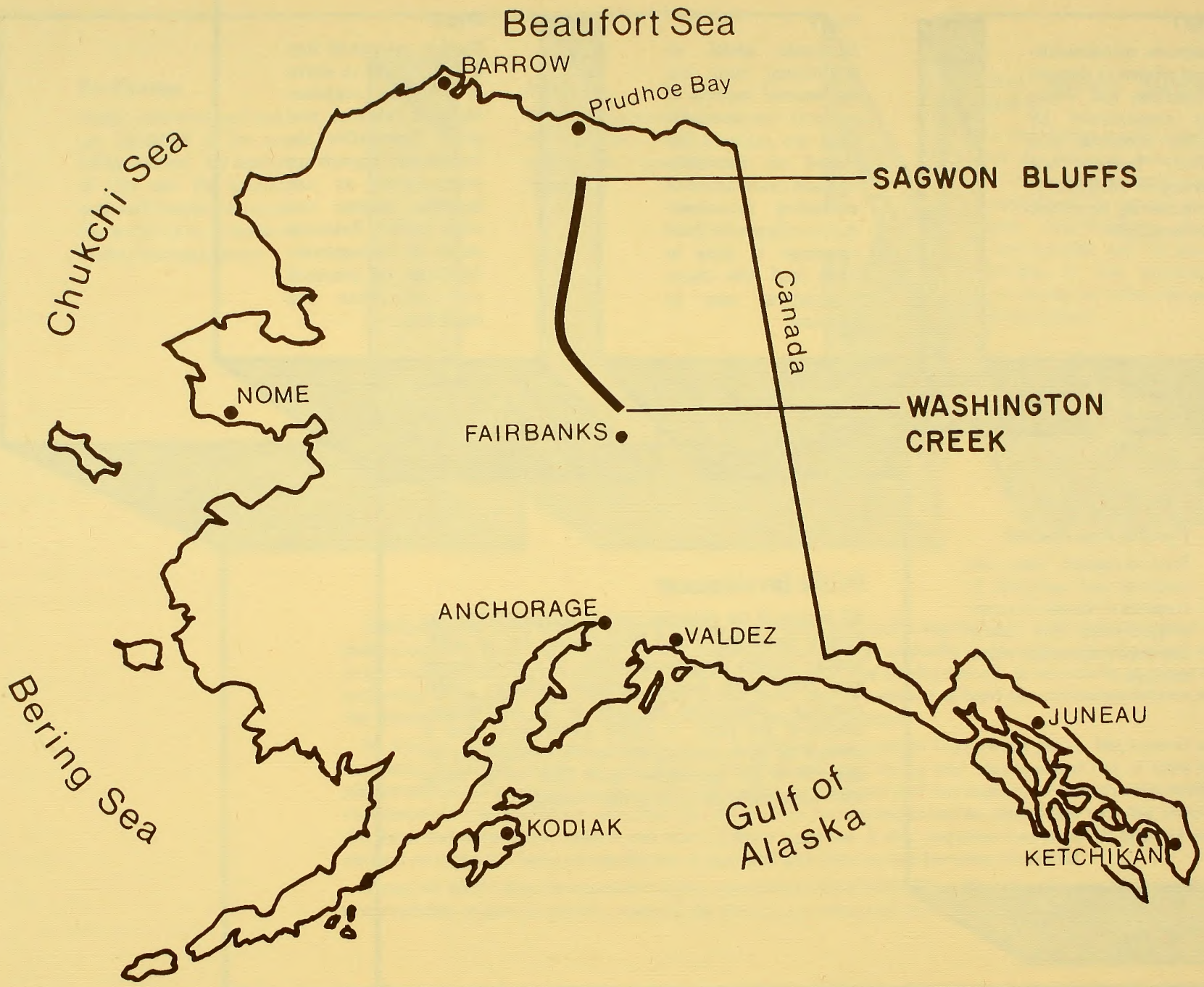
Further analysis of Step 2 data is done to arrive at planning decisions for each resource program. Cumulative environmental impacts are summarized as are benefits, outputs and other factors. Resource maps for management decisions are prepared and decisions are published.

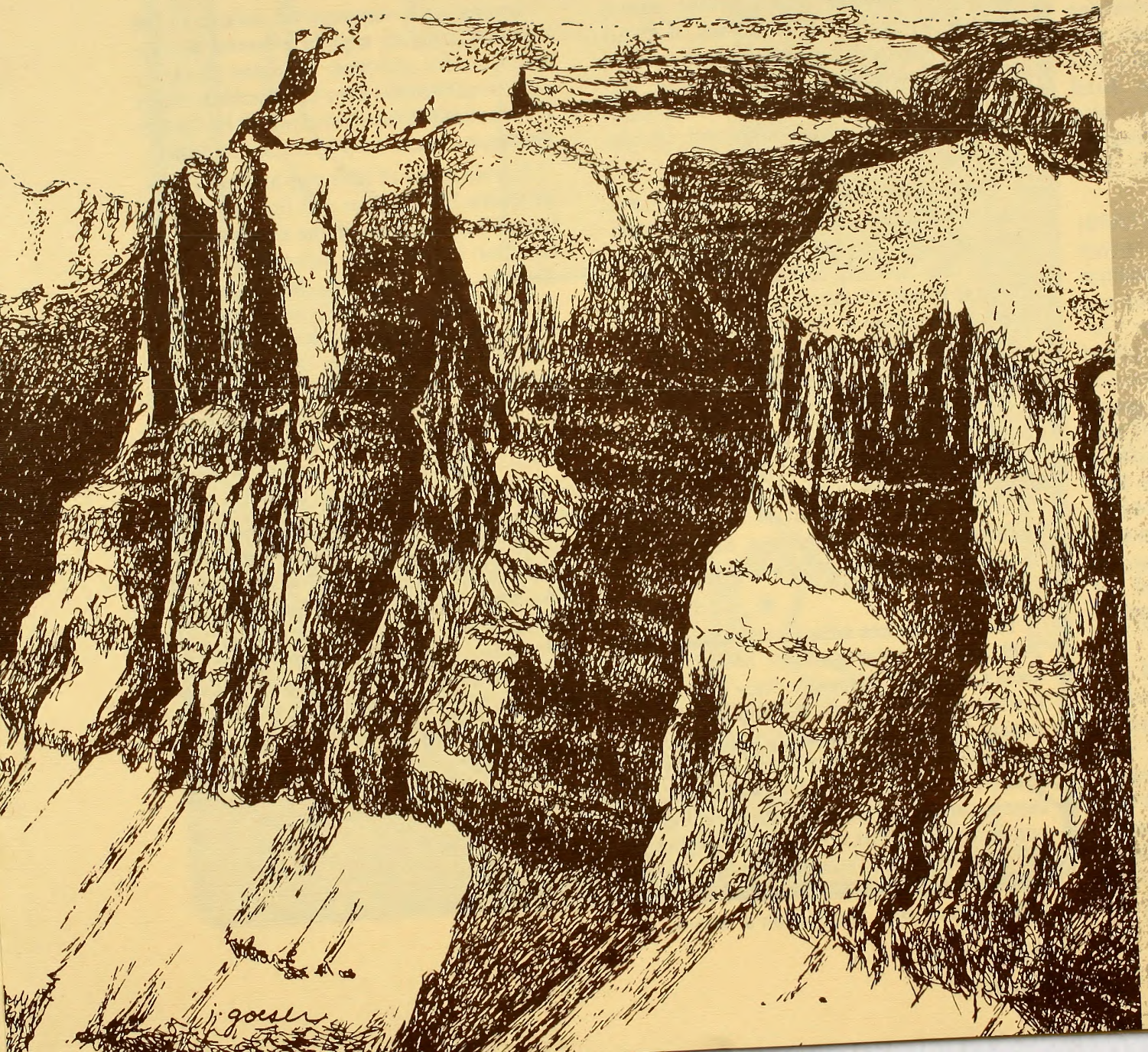
Planning Area Analysis

Socio-economic data are collected and analyzed. It contains economic demand projections for each resource and a social value analysis.

Public Involvement

All phases of the planning system, as required by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, heavily involve the general public. The involvement may take many forms; personal contact, public meetings, information by mail or by newspaper, television and radio. A public involvement plan is written for each planning unit and is available for inspection at the appropriate BLM field office along with documentation of the public contacts.


Beaufort Sea
BARROW
Prudhoe Bay
Chukchi Sea
SAGWON BLUFFS
Canada
NOME
FAIRBANKS
WASHINGTON CREEK
ANCHORAGE
VALDEZ
JUNEAU
Bering Sea
KODIAK
Gulf of Alaska
KETCHIKAN



General Description

The Utility Corridor is a strip of land extending north from Washington Creek to about 60 miles south of Prudhoe Bay. About 336 miles long, the Corridor varies in width from 12 to 24 miles and contains about 3.6 million acres. The Corridor was withdrawn and designated as a utility and transportation corridor by Public Land Order 5150 in 1971. This PLO also designated an inner corridor, extending the entire length and varying in width from three to 20 miles.

The trans-Alaska oil pipeline (TAPS) meanders through the Corridor in a 54-foot right-of-way. Related pipeline facilities such as pump stations, material sites and access roads are located along the Corridor's length. The Haul Road, completed in 1974 to serve pipeline construction needs, is a 28-foot wide, all-weather, gravel highway within a 200-foot right-of-way granted to the State of Alaska. It extends from the Elliott Highway to Prudhoe Bay. The highway system from Fairbanks to Prudhoe Bay is managed by the State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT-PF). North of the Yukon River the highway is closed to public travel.

Between the Alaska Range and the Brooks Range of mountains, the Corridor runs through spruce, birch, and aspen forests in the Yukon, Koyukuk, and Dietrich river valleys. Elevations range from 1,000 feet in the valleys to 6,400 feet in the mountainous areas. Treeless tundra occurs above 2,000 feet. Some prominent land features in the southern portion of the Corridor are Wickersham Dome (D-7), the Yukon River, Fort Hamlin Hills (B-6), and Caribou Mountain (B-6).

Entering the Brooks Range, or the Arctic Mountain Province, the Corridor passes through alpine tundra, consisting of dwarf birch, willow and low heath shrubs. Some barren, rugged peaks reach 7,000 feet. Major land features are Sukakpak Mountain, Chandalar Shelf, the Continental Divide, and Atigun Canyon (all C-3, C-4).

The Brooks Range Foothills is the next landscape province the Corridor crosses. Also referred to as the Arctic Foothills Province, the foothills blend into the Arctic Coastal Plains. Vegetation is mostly moist tundra composed of dwarf shrubs, sedges, cotton grass tussocks, mosses, and lichens. The Sagavanirktok River (D-2) and Sagwon Bluffs (C-2) are significant features.

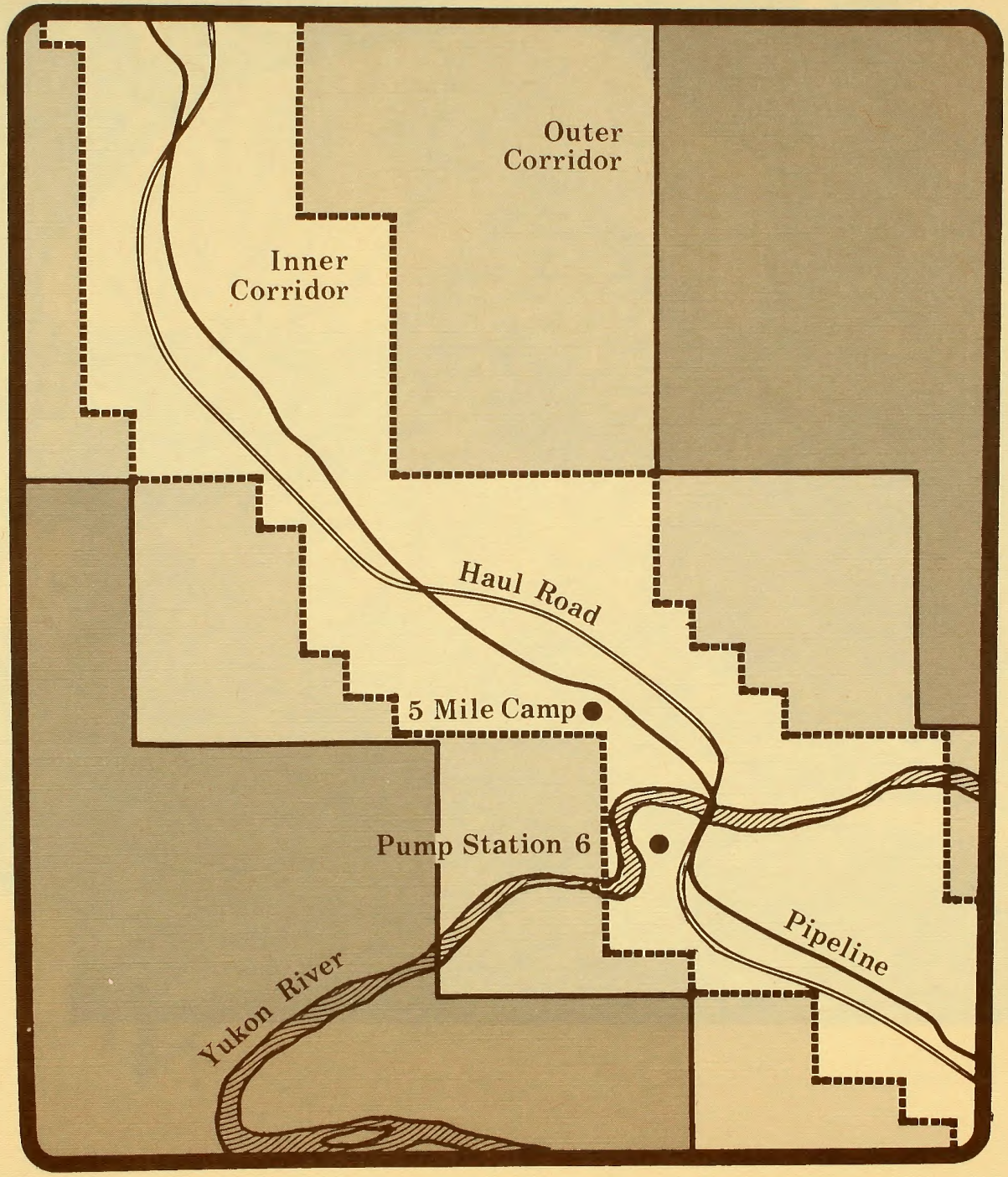
The Corridor planning area has a limited economy, currently almost entirely pipeline related. About 200 persons live within the Corridor, and 90 percent of them derive their income from the pipeline. The rest are involved in mining or transportation activities.

The pipeline has substantial regional impact, and is a major economic benefit to the state and nation. Presently there is no other Corridor activity which has any significant impact. Future oil and/or gas pipelines in the Corridor have even greater potential for economic impact. Other uses likely to become important economically are mining and recreation. With increased gold or copper development, mining activity could become a significant factor in the Fairbanks region economy. Recreation's share of employment in the region, currently estimated at four percent, should remain about the same.

Several rural communities outside of the Corridor are only slightly affected by present Corridor activities. Wiseman (B-4), the only community within the Corridor, likely will continue to be most affected by further development and activity in the Corridor.

A wide range of lifestyles and beliefs exist within the Corridor and the surrounding area. Many Alaskans in the area around the Corridor are partially self-reliant on subsistence use of game, fish, and other natural products while many are fully dependent on urban services. Pipeline and highway workers within the Corridor live in self-contained camps and generally leave the planning area for family and recreation visits. These different lifestyles affect peoples' beliefs.

People tend to value those things which support their way of life. They also value things for future use and for purely symbolic reasons and are involved when people consider land use in the Corridor. They evaluate how that use will affect their livelihood, expenses and recreation. The symbolism of different land uses is important, even when no objective tie between their circumstances and the use can be seen.



TYPICAL SECTION OF UTILITY CORRIDOR

Existing Rights of Way

Utility Corridor—12 to 24 miles wide
336 miles long

Inner Corridor—3 to 20 miles wide

Haul Road—200 feet wide

Oil Pipeline—54 to 64 feet normally

Fuel Gas Line—50 feet wide

Access Roads—100 feet wide

Looking south from Atigun Pass toward Chandalar Camp, the pipeline and Chandalar River are in the foreground.

Major Issues and Conditions

Major issues and conditions which determined the land use decisions in the Corridor are: State and Federal policies on the Corridor, facility development, wilderness, and coordination of planning between the Federal, State, Borough, and local governments.

State and Federal Policies on the Corridor

The Governor of Alaska, in his 1978 policy on the Haul Road, kept the road north of the Yukon River closed to the public, but discussed possible public access by tour buses. The long distance will require service facilities along the way for continued industrial and commercial uses and for road maintenance.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) set the policy that public lands be retained in Federal ownership unless disposal will serve the national interest.

Public Land Order (PLO) 5150, set aside the Utility Corridor as a utility and transportation corridor, withdrawing the land from all forms of appropriation under the public land laws and mineral leasing. The PLO does allow location and development of metalliferous minerals (those minerals which can be claimed under the 1872 Mining Law) on certain lands and for leasing, other than for minerals.

The Alaska Natural Gas Transportation System Act and the subsequent Presidential decision to route a natural gas pipeline through the Utility Corridor means that additional needs for gravel and rights-of-way must be planned.

Facility Development

Service facilities could be located randomly along the Corridor, depending on projected use. An alternative was to cluster facilities for all uses at a few planned locations or nodes. Nodes could be located where the natural environment has been modified because of TAPS or Haul Road construction, or new sites could be selected. The locations of major Haul Road and TAPS facilities are fixed and the location of the major gas pipeline and Haul Road facilities have limited flexibility. A key issue, then, is how well these locations would serve other uses, recognizing that protection of the pipeline system is of foremost importance.

This land use plan states that:

*State highway needs for maintenance camps and material sites be met in coordination with TAPS operation and maintenance, node development, and gas line construction.

*Construction of the proposed Alaska natural gas pipeline has priority, but in close coordination with other Corridor uses.

*All permanent facilities except pump and compressor facilities be consolidated at carefully selected nodes in the vicinities of Livengood Camp (C-7), Yukon Crossing-Five Mile Camp, Prospect (B-5), Coldfoot (B-5), Chandalar (C-4), and Pump Station #3 (C-3) area.

Fish Wheel

Wilderness

Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) requires that public land areas of 5,000 or more acres, having wilderness characteristics, be protected and managed by BLM in a manner that will not impair their suitability for Congressional inclusion in the National Wildlerness Preservation System. Congress specifically exempted certain mining, grazing, and mineral leasing uses. All other uses must not cause unnecessary or undue degradation of the land and its resources. Conflicts with expanded mineral development and access to and from the Corridor are expected.

Coordination of Planning

Land use plans prepared by BLM provide for compliance with State and Federal air, water, noise, and other pollution standards or adopted plans. BLM must assure that its land use plans for public land are consistent with State and local laws, regulations, and land use plans to the maximum extent possible. Close coordination and cooperation with the State of Alaska through the Department of Policy Development and Planning, the North Slope Borough and the Fairbanks North Star Borough did occur, resulting in decisions that reflect concerns of these State and local governments. Coordination and cooperation will be continued to assure that management of the Corridor lands considers local, state, and national needs.

Archeological dig on the kame which later became the material site for Pump Station 5 near Prospect

Land

The Haul Road on the North Slope

Program Description

The Land Program includes activity planning for intensive land use, such as pipelines, roads, airports, commercial uses, issuing use authorizations and rights-of-way, providing land for public purposes, revocation of unneeded land withdrawals, and withdrawal of land from certain uses to protect particular resources, such as nesting sites for peregrine falcons.

Resource Description and Uses

The Corridor contains approximately 450 acres of patented land. There is also land claimed under the 1872 Mining Law. The remainder is public land. Present uses of the public land mainly concern the oil pipeline, the Haul Road, the proposed natural gas pipeline and functions related to this use. Some mineral development is occurring and likely will expand because of easier access and the rising cost of gold. Recreation use is occurring between Washington Creek (C-7) and the Yukon River and is expected to increase, requiring additional land for access, campgrounds, and other recreational needs.

Multiple Use Objective

The objective of the Land Program in the Corridor is to meet public needs for land for such purposes as rights-of-way for utilities and transportation and commercial development.

Multiple Use Decisions

1. Make land available through permits and leases for use by governmental units at Livengood Camp area, Yukon Crossing-Five Mile area, Prospect, Coldfoot, Chandalar, and Pump Station #3 area.

Reason

Nodes for development were selected in areas previously disturbed during pipeline and Haul Road construction. Logistics, spacing and environmental concerns have been considered in the selection of this minimum number of nodes necessary. Certain areas were eliminated because of resource conflicts and environmental problems.

2. Eliminate the present airstrip at Five Mile (B-6); reserve option for a new strip at a different location in the Five Mile area.

Reason

The airstrip is on the Haul Road, causing the road to be closed when a plane is landing. An alternative site north of the highway maintenance camp has been suggested.

3. Stabilize, by shaping and seeding, all TAPS airstrips not maintained by the state. Make Livengood Camp airstrip available for public use.

Black and Grizzly bear are abundant in the Corridor.

Reason

Shaping and seeding will prevent erosion of the airstrip, and preserve them in place for emergency or possible future use. People in the Livengood Camp area want that strip maintained for public use. The State is the logical governmental unit to maintain this strip should it become operational.

4. Make land available for commercial development related to road use at the Livengood Camp area, Yukon Crossing-Five Mile, Coldfoot and/or Prospect, and Chandalar.

Reason

Commercial development requests are expected at Prospect and/or Coldfoot and the Yukon River. Old Man Camp (B-6), though not considered early in the planning, may be considered in place of Prospect. More detailed evaluation must be completed before final decisions are made. The best assumption regarding commercial use is that at least one facility will be needed by a tour bus operation north of the Yukon River. The primary site for this is Prospect or Coldfoot. A second permit could be issued at the Five Mile-Yukon Crossing site or in the Livengood Camp area if demand warrants. Lodging, fuel, and vehicle services are needed also by State and Federal agencies, truckers and other Haul Road users. Any proposed commerical development of Chandalar will be limited to serving safety needs of truckers and travelers in coordination with the North Slope Borough. It will be considered after the primary site at Prospect/Coldfoot, and secondary sites at Yukon Crossing-Five Mile and Livengood Camp.

5. Permit permanent research facilities in the Chandalar or Pump Station #3 vicinity to provide for continued research and study within the Corridor.

Reason

Permanent facilities for researchers in the Corridor should be in the nodes; temporary use authorizations can be considered for temporary camps at other locations. The many studies now being conducted are important to land managers and to industry to better understand the environment with which they must deal.

6. Take appropriate action to resolve the occupancy of cabins on public land in the area of Wiseman, Nolan (B-4), and Livengood.

Reason

The occupancy of cabins on public land in these areas must be resolved to fulfill the requirements of the law.

7. Take appropriate action to safeguard against damages to the pipeline and any new pipelines and related facilities.

Reason

This will strengthen efforts to discourage travel along transmission facilities (i.e. power lines, pipelines) to prevent damage.

8. Initiate revocation of the Rampart Dam withdrawal (PLO 3520).

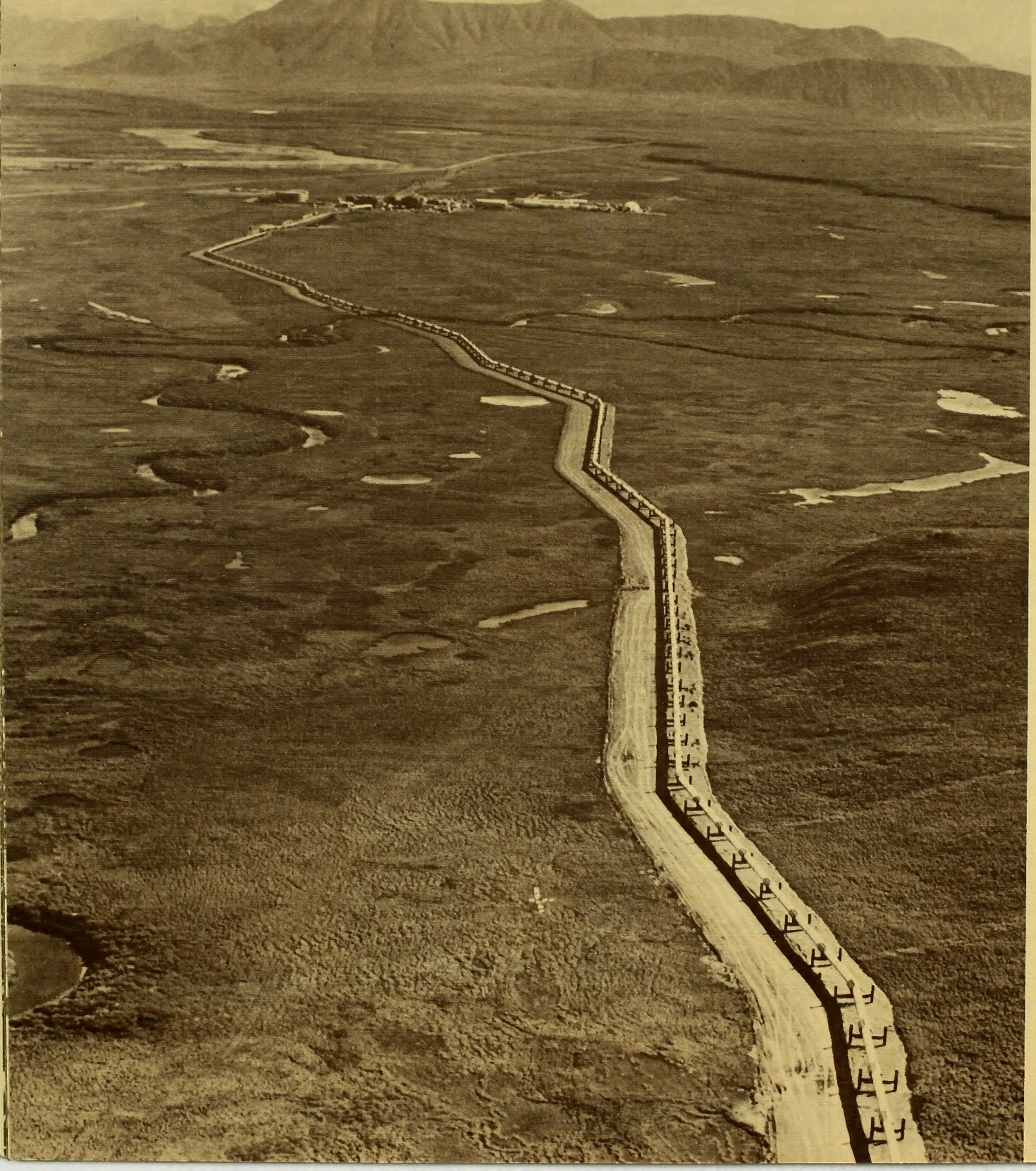
Reason

Designation of Yukon Flats National Monument placed primary emphasis on most lands withdrawn by Public Land Order 3520 as a wildlife refuge, making construction of Rampart Dam unlikely.

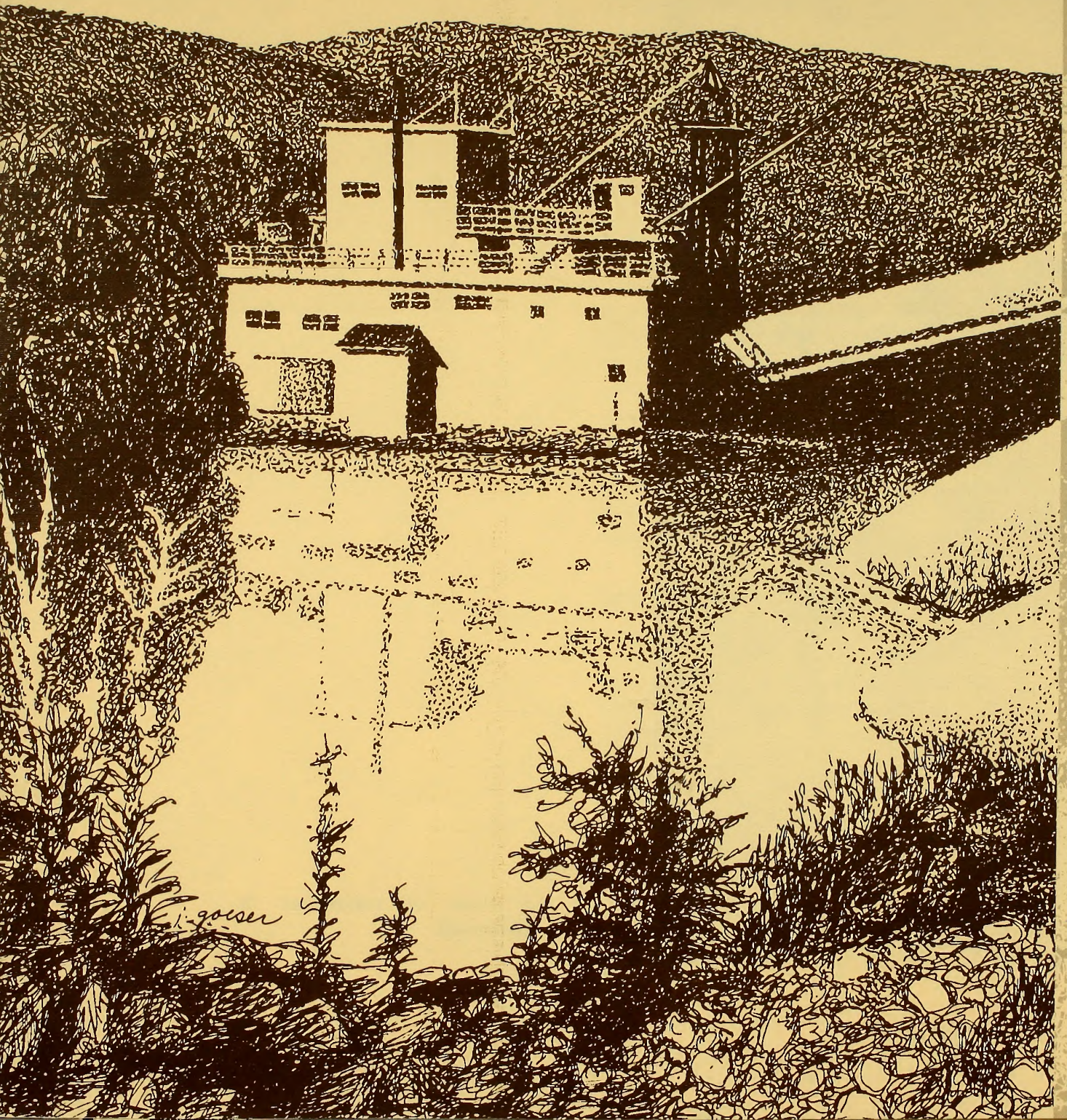
9. Authorize communication development on selected sites, using design criteria to minimize undesirable contrast with the natural landscape.

Reason

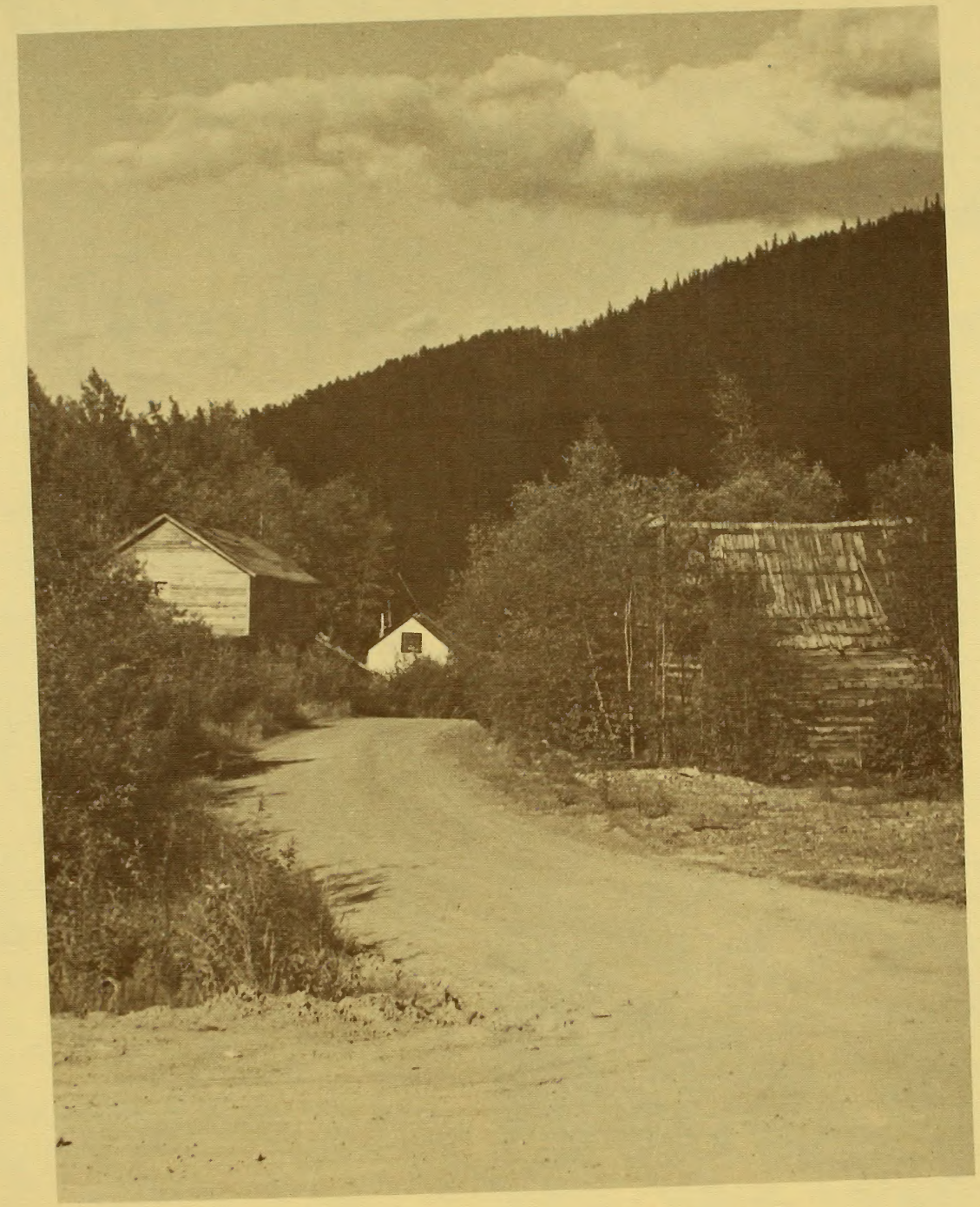
It is BLM policy to consolidate communication sites. Communication needs of industry, government, and those needed for commerical development will require space on selected mountain tops. Unplanned development could result in unsightly facility proliferation.



Looking South to Pump Station #3



Minerals



A view of residences in Livengood

Program Description

The Minerals Program includes disposal of minerals through sales and permits; determining validity of mining claims on which patents have been requested; and keeping a current inventory of mineral deposits.

Resource Description and Uses

The Corridor crosses several highly mineralized areas, and increased development is expected. Gold continues to be mined in the Livengood and Wiseman area. Deposits of other minerals exist in the Corridor. Sand and gravel were used extensively during the oil pipeline and Haul Road construction, and the projected gas pipeline construction will use large quantities of sand and gravel which in the foreseeable future will continue to be the most extensively used and valuable mineral.

Multiple Use Objective

Allow for the mining of sand and gravel needed in the operation and maintenance of the oil pipeline, Haul Road, proposed gas line, future transmission facilities, and other approved uses.

Multiple Use Decisions

1. Continue to allow mineral location for metalliferous minerals within the Corridor except for certain areas to be withdrawn for specific uses.

Reason

The Corridor, except for the inner Corridor, is open to metalliferous mineral location. Certain areas may be withdrawn for special uses, such as communication sites and mineral licks.

2. Allow sand and gravel removal from the numerous material sites identified in the resource analysis for present and future authorized uses.

Reason

Keeping the road open and maintained is critical for access to Prudhoe Bay and for operation and maintenance of the oil lines, construction of the gas lines, and for future transportation needs. Gravel resources must be managed carefully to prevent economic waste and damage to other resources from excessive material site development. Gravel is relatively scarce in certain localities, particularly in the Sagavanirktok River area.

Middle fork of the Koyukuk near Wiseman

Forest Products

Program Description

The Forestry Program is limited, dealing mostly with issuing use authorizations for firewood and houselogs.

Resource Description and Uses

No formal inventory has been made of the forest resource in the Corridor, but in this northern area, it is a relatively limited resource. Commercial production is not likely except in conjunction with adjacent lands.

Multiple Use Objective

Manage forest land to supply local, non-commercial needs, except salvage operations, and to complement the management of other resource values.

Multiple Use Decisions

1. Manage forest land in the Corridor for continued supply of products to local residents for non-commerical needs.

   ### Reason

   Demand for forest products for individual use, especially firewood, is increasing. The public is using dead and down timber for firewood and green timber for houselogs.

2. Restrict commercial harvesting of houselogs and sawtimber to limited on-site uses within the Corridor.

   ### Reason

   Knowledge of the extent of the timber resource is limited. Stands of commercial timber are in remote areas and not easily accessible. Commercial forests closer to the Fairbanks market area, owned and managed by the State of Alaska and Native corporations, provide timber needed for commercial uses.

3. Allow commerical harvesting for salvage after right-of-way clearing, fires or damage by other natural causes.

   ### Reason

   Only in cases of salvage after fire or damage by other natural causes, or pipeline related development in the Corridor should timber be harvested commercially.

Range

Program Description

The Range Program is management of the vegetation for grazing by domestic animals.

Resource Description and Uses

A vegetative map of Corridor lands has been prepared, but no forage carrying capacities have been determined. No grazing leases or permits have been issued in the Corridor.

Multiple Use Objective

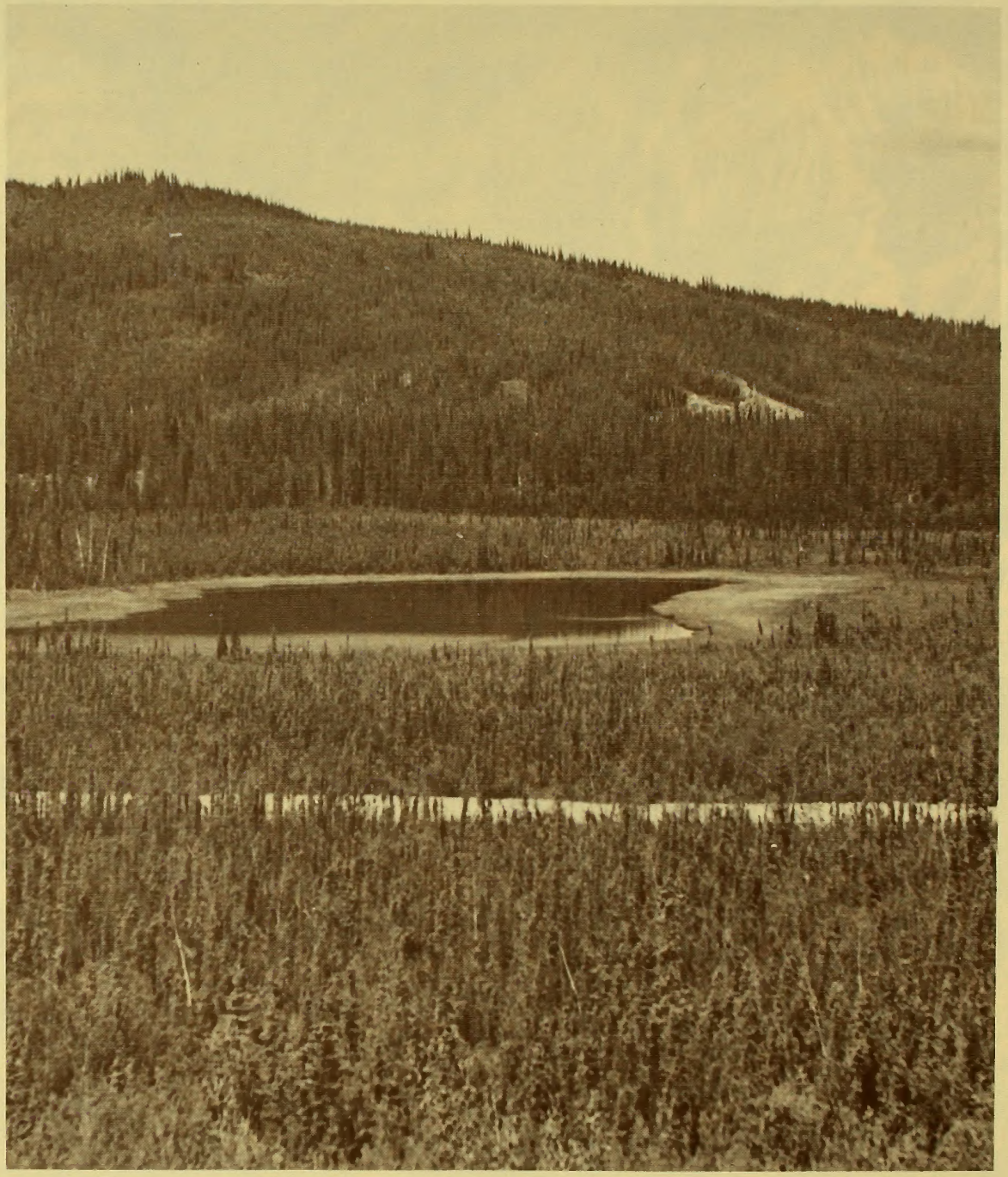
Manage the vegetative resources to complement watershed, recreation, and wildlife resources.

Multiple Use Decision

1. Do not issue grazing permits within the Corridor.

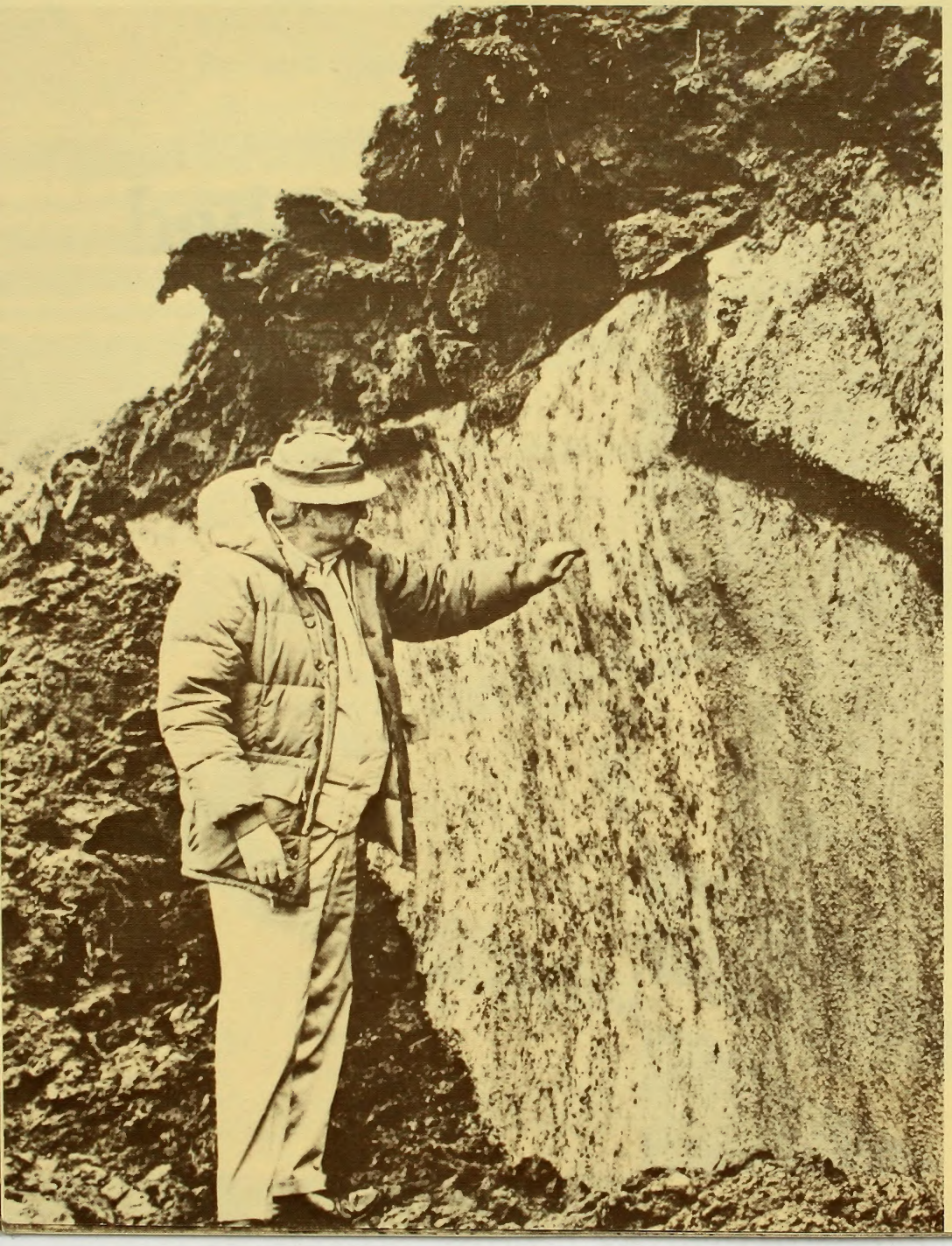
Reason

BLM policy is to not issue grazing permits which will conflict with wildlife use of range. Any horse grazing north of the Yukon River would be associated with pack trips and will be accommodated by temporary use authorizations.



Black spruce (foreground) and white spruce south of Hess Creek

Watershed



A good example of a permafrost ice lens, exposed during Haul Road construction

Program Description

The Watershed Program is designed to provide public land users with a sufficient quantity of qualtiy water for their needs, to reduce flood and sediment damage, and to protect plant species whose existence is sensitive.

Resource Description and Uses

There has been some erosion and siltation from gravel mining and construction of the pipeline and Haul Road. Water quality is generally good. Ice jams during spring thaw and runoff cause flooding. Communities of plants whose existence is sensitive occur in the Sukakpak and Wiehl Mountains (both C-4), Atigun Canyon, Slope Mountain (both C-3), and Sagwon Bluff (C-2) area. Finding adequate supplies of water for domestic and commercial uses at economic prices was difficult during construction of the oil pipeline and will continue to be a problem.

Multiple Use Objective

The best management for Corridor watersheds will be to maintain them in their present condition by protective stipulations in all use authorizations which might affect vegetative cover or water quality. Continue to identify and protect sensitive plant communities.

Multiple Use Decisions

1. Protect stream banks and lakeshores by restricting activities to prevent loss of streamside vegetation.

Reason

Protection of the streamside vegetation to reduce bank erosion will insure that water quality is maintained. Proper setback distances from streambanks on a site by site basis will allow managers the needed flexibility to set reasonable standards for varying activities.

2. Temporarily designate all public land in the Corridor as "limited" to use by ORV's until an ORV plan is developed. Temporary limits to ORV use are:

   A. Use of ORV's, regardless of size, would be by permit during summer, freeze-up and break-up.

   B. Use of ORV's, except snow machines weighing less than 600 pounds, would be by permit during winter.

Reason

All public land must be designated as either "open", "limited" or "closed" to off-road vehicles. Protection of the tundra, permafrost and ice-rich soils must have high priority in allowing use by man and his machines.

3. Manage the Washington Creek Ecology-Fire Experimental area (D-7) for research.

Reason

The research area has important research values. Research is being done now cooperatively by several agencies.

4. Restrict development of land within the floodplain of the river to avoid loss of property by floodwaters.

Reason

Executive Order 11988 establishes the conditions on the uses of land within a floodplain.

5. Develop seasonal fire administration sites at Yukon Crossing-Five Mile, Livengood, Prospect (to include air support now in Bettles) (A-5), Coldfoot.

Reason

Increasing human activity within the Corridor greatly increases the potential for fire in a high fire danger and fire occurrence area.

6. Develop a fire management plan which will consider improving wildlife habitat in coordination with adjacent land managers.

Reason

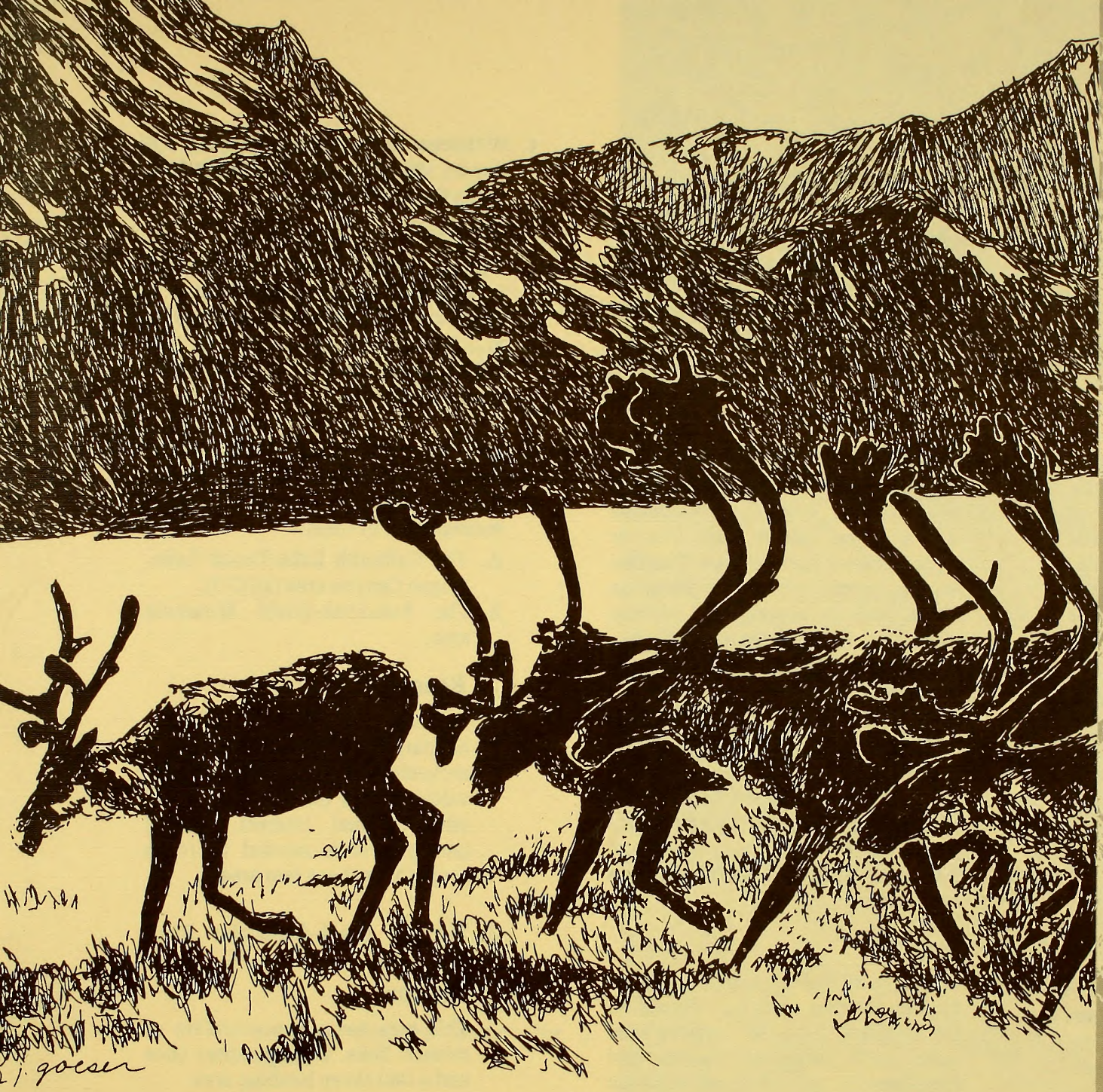
Designation of national monuments, study withdrawals, and accelerated transfer of adjacent lands to the State and Natives make a coordinated approach to fire management necessary. The wildlife habitat management plan or plans to be developed within the Corridor will identify the habitat needs and ways to meet the needs; the fire management plan will coordinate the wildlife objectives and fire management objectives.

7. Develop fire administration sites at Yukon Crossing-Five Mile, Livengood, Prospect and Coldfoot.

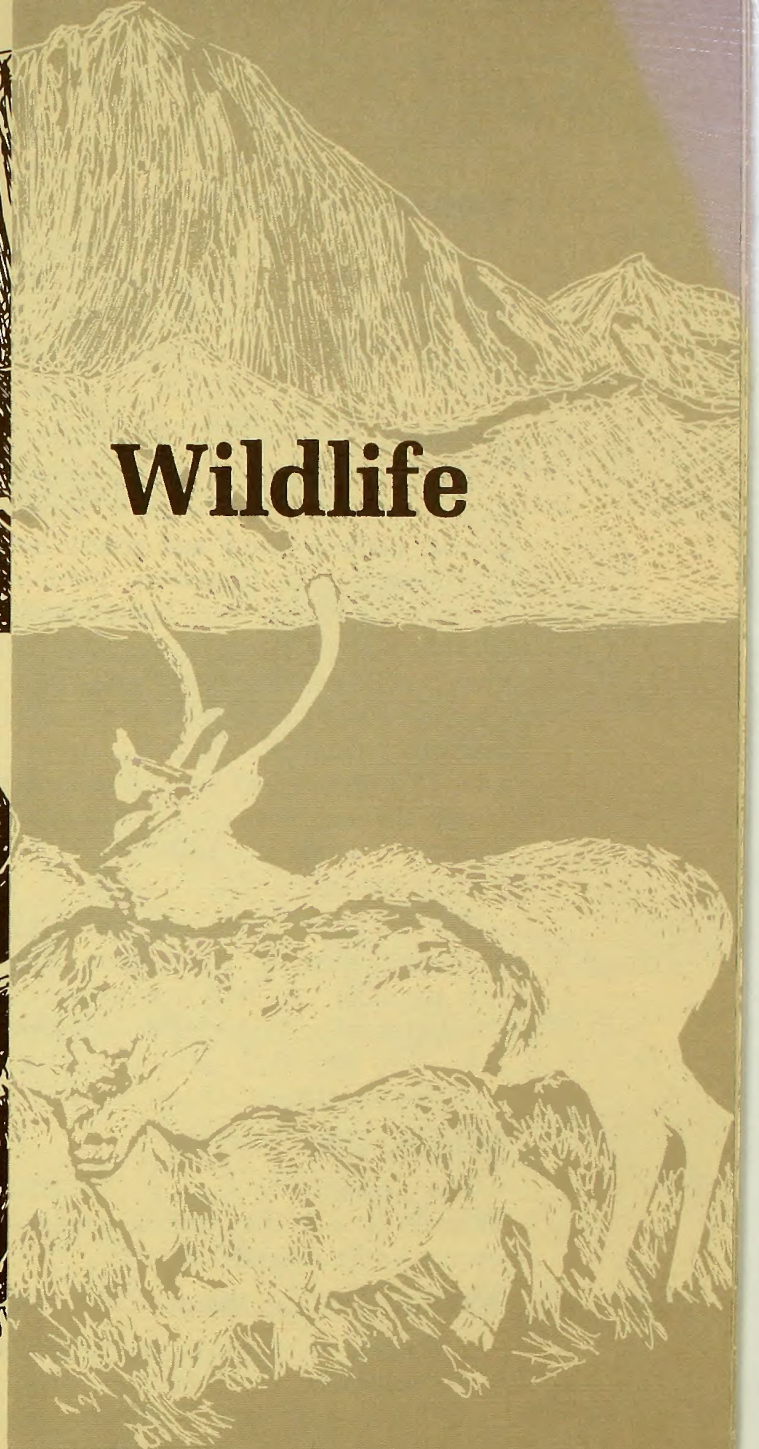
Reason

Development of fire administration sites is necessary to provide improved response time in controlling fires that threaten human life, facilities or resources. Development sites will be coordinated with fire planning, node development and other administrative needs.

Dietrich River with the Snowden Mountains in the background



Wildlife



Program Description

The Wildlife Program is concerned primarily with maintaining wildlife habitat and protecting endangered species and critical habitat for terrestrial and aquatic life.

Resource Description and Uses

The Corridor contains a wide variety of habitat and associated wildlife, including moose, caribou, black and grizzly bears, Dall sheep, wolf, furbearers, ptarmigan, grouse, waterfowl, and the endangered peregrine falcon. Sheefish, grayling, arctic char, pike, whitefish, lake trout, and four species of salmon are some of the aquatic wildlife. Hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife viewing, and photography occur within the Corridor. Big game hunting is prohibited within five miles of the TAPS north of the Yukon River.

The peregrine falcon nests at Sagwon Bluffs and along the Yukon River. Critical fish spawning and rearing areas are identified. Dall sheep lambing areas and mineral licks are identified as critical habitat needing special management.

Multiple Use Objective

The primary objective of the Wildlife Program is to protect critical habitat and maintain other wildlife habitat.

Multiple Use Decisions

1. Expand and maintain existing critical (restricted or population limiting) "year-long" and "winter" moose ranges through manipulation or protection of existing vegetation.

Reason

Some wildlife habitat will be lost in clearing for stream crossing, and for other reasons. Some clearings will revegetate in willows and other browse plants, while others will require planting to replace lost browse.

2. Restrict fire suppression activities near raptor nesting sites during nesting and rearing.

Reason

Unrestricted fire suppression measures can cause more damage than allowing fires to burn over or close to raptor nesting sites. The law requires protection of the peregrine falcon and its nesting and rearing areas. Withdrawal from mineral entry of critical peregrine habitat may be considered.

3. Participate with adjacent land owners and managers in any management plans on Corridor waters flowing into Minto (C-7), Yukon, and Kanuti Flats (A-6), the Koyukuk marsh and pot hole areas (A-5) and the North Slope lake system.

Reason

In nearly all cases, principle waterfowl production areas are adjacent to the Corridor. Because Corridor land uses will influence waterfowl management objectives on adjacent land, close cooperation is required.

4. Withdraw from all mineral entry the eleven identified Dall sheep lambing and mineral licks areas.

Reason

These areas are critical to maintenance of sheep populations in the Corridor. This withdrawal, along with protective measures in the habitat management plan, should give proper protection.

5. The following areas have critical wildlife habitat and further studies will be done to decide the best management of them:

   A. The Galbraith Lake-Toolik Lake-Atigun Canyon area (all C-3).

   B. The Sukakpak-Wiehl Mountain area.

Reason

Because of critical wildlife habitat, rare plants, historical and archeological sites and scenic values within the Corridor, all of vital national interest, special management is needed to focus properly on these two areas.

   C. The Joe Creek-Chandalar Shelf area (C-4).

Reason

This area has a concentration of mineral licks, nesting raptor sites and a Dall sheep lambing area.

Caribou crossing under the pipeline

D. The bluffs along the Yukon River (B-6, C-6).

E. Sagwon Bluffs (C-2).

Reason

These areas have been identified as peregrine falcon habitat.

F. The Jim River and Prospect Creek areas (B-5).

Reason

This has the highest quality year-long habitat for salmon in the Corridor. Proposed development and mining endanger this habitat. Also, these areas have high archeological values.

G. The Bonanza Creek area (B-5).

Reason

Just below Bonanza Creek is an important salmon fry overwintering area. Springs originating here are the main source of wintertime water flow.

H. The Ivishak River (D-2), Lupine River, Accomplishment Creek, Ribdon River area (all D-3).

Reason

These are important char overwintering areas.

I. The Kanuti (A-6, B-6) and Sagavanirktok River areas (D-2).

J. The Wickersham Dome Area (D-7).

Reason

These areas have been identified as historic or caribou winter range.

6. Protect raptor habitat and critical nesting areas.

Reason

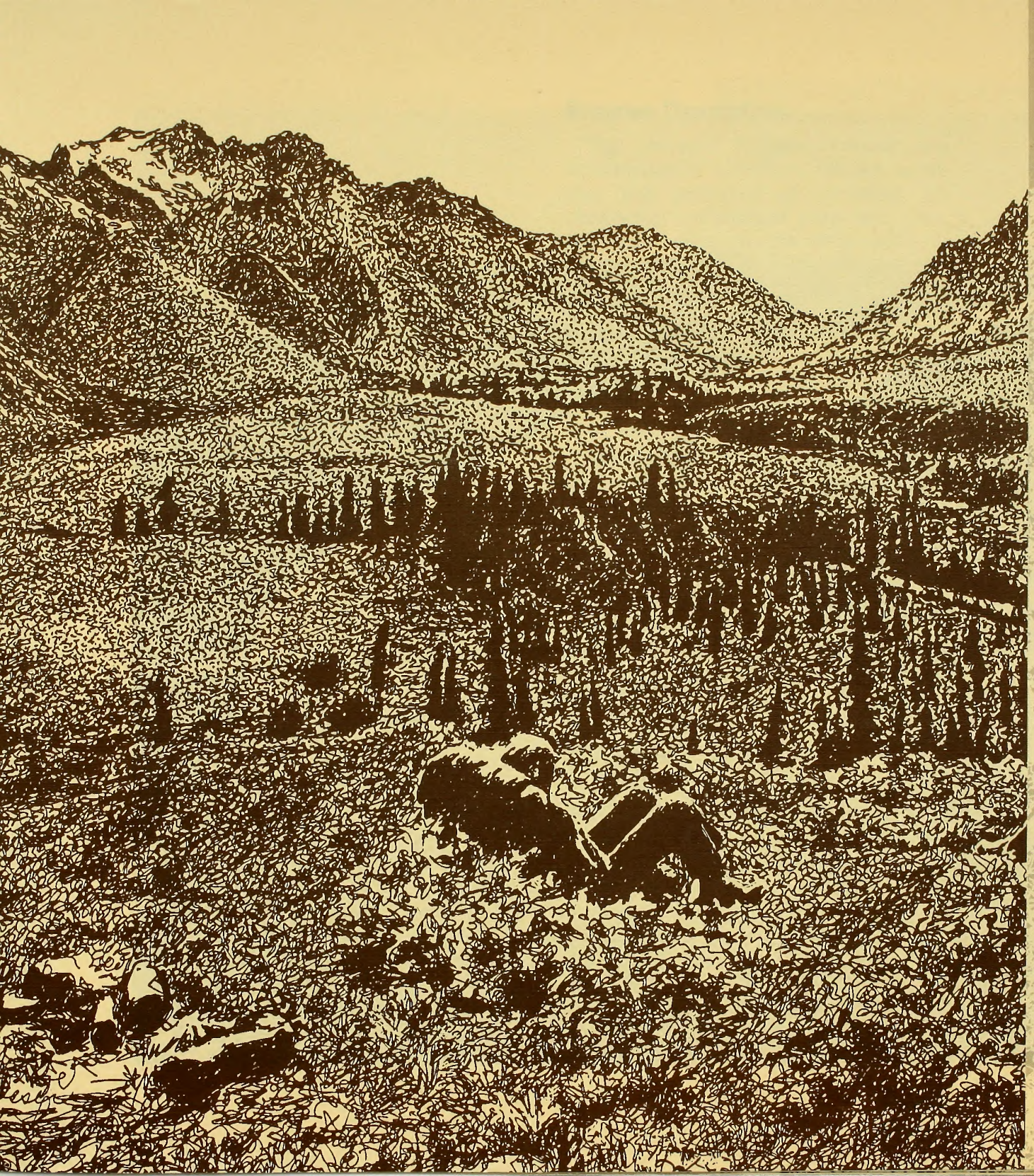
The Endangered Species Act mandates protection of threatened and endangered wildlife species. Protection of crucial raptor habitats preserves the integrity of raptor populations and maintains predator-prey relationships.

7. Protect fish overwintering habitat.

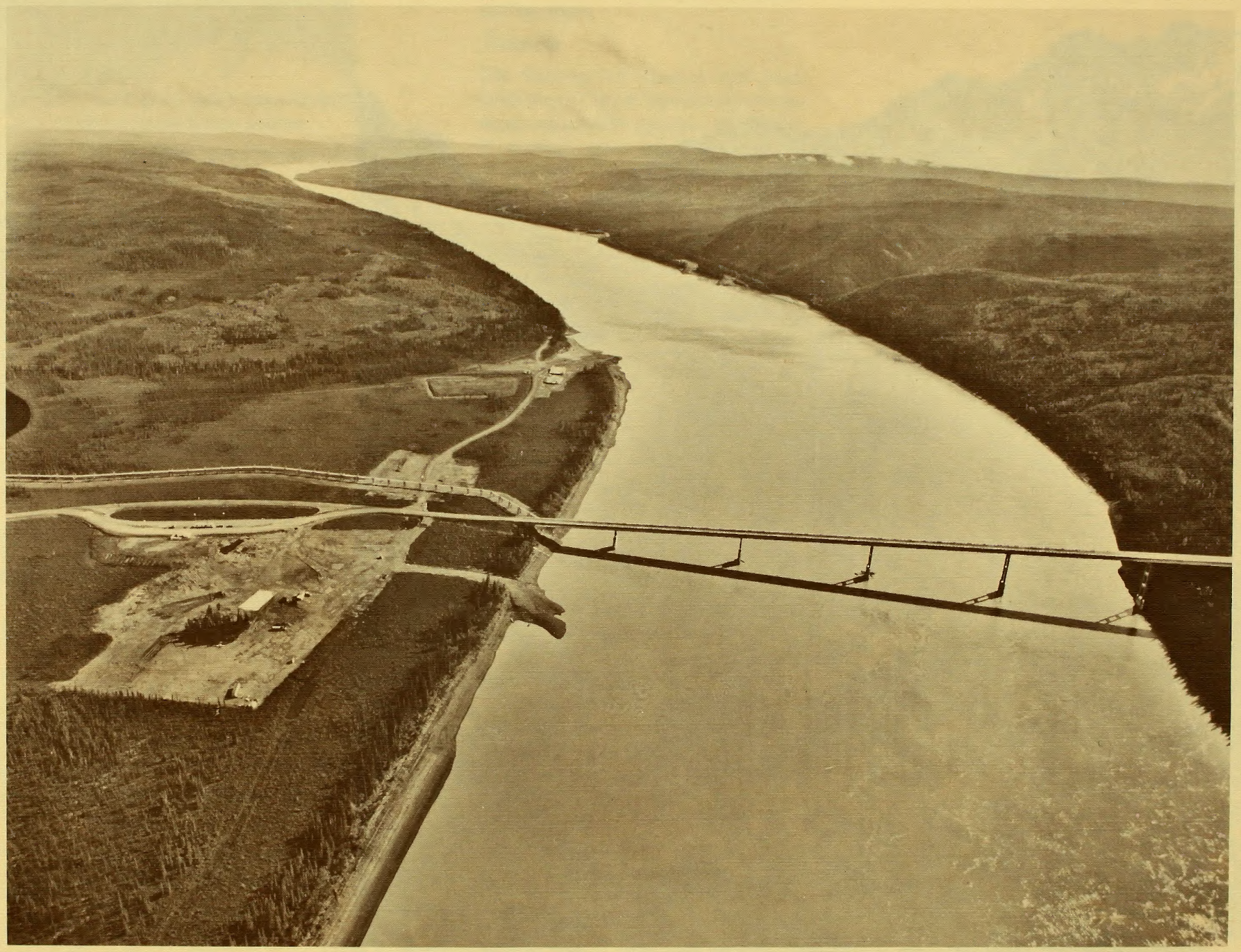
Reason

The critical overwintering areas have been mapped.

Sufficient water levels should be maintained to meet the needs of overwintering fish. Conditions vary at each site, so stipulations should vary at each site to mitigate or prevent adverse alterations in fish habitat.



Recreation



Program Description

The program includes planning and development of recreation facilities, inventory and protection of historical, archeological and cultural sites, and maintaining and enhancing the visual quality of the public land.

Resource Description

Recreational uses are sightseeing, hunting, fishing, boating, river floating, rock climbing, hiking, picnicking, berry picking, camping, cross-country skiing, and off-road vehicle use.

Many archeological sites were identified during the oil pipeline and Haul Road archeological clearance surveys. One has been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. The several gold mining areas contain buildings (many still in use), trails and other historical objects, some worthy of nomination to the Register. The North Slope Borough has identified many traditional land use sites and areas of current and traditional subsistence use by the Inupiat Eskimos.

Multiple Use Objective

The Recreation Program objective is to provide opportunities for the public to enjoy public land and to minimize any detrimental effects on the land, water, and other resources.

Multiple Use Decisions

1. Provide for needed recreation concessions in agreement with the Haul Road Policy and node development.

Reason

Development of facilities at Yukon Crossing-Five Mile area is recommended to meet needs of truckers, government agencies and recreationists. The area up to and immediately north of the Yukon Crossing bridge is open to the public. The north and south banks of the Yukon River are used for boat launching by sightseers and hunters.

Limited services are provided to the public as far as the junction near Livengood Camp. Limited food and vehicle services are being provided by private enterprises. A temporary use authorization for tire and fuel services has been issued at the Yukon Crossing.

2. Develop recreation access and rest stop facilities south of the Yukon River. Develop only needed rest stop facilities north of the Yukon River. Development and maintenance should be in cooperation with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

Reason

There is no reason to develop recreation access points north of the Yukon River under present State and Federal policy. However, basic sanitation facilities are needed to accommodate current use of the Haul Road and prevent environmental degradation.

Yukon River Bridge

Cabin near Wiseman

3. Provide public services along the Haul Road.

   A. **South of the Yukon River,** plan and develop recreation sites and public service sites in cooperation with the State of Alaska. Areas recommended for facility development:

      a. **Wickersham Dome Area**

         Designate the Wickersham Dome Recreation Area, after re-evaluation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Construct a roadside rest suitable for truckers, tour buses, and recreationists. Provide for year-around access to Wickersham Dome Recreation area and Yukon Flats National Monument. Construct a Corridor interpretive exhibit utilizing overlook potential of area.

      b. **Grapefruit Rocks Area (D-7)**

         Construct a wayside interpretive exhibit. Provide toilet and solid waste facilities. Construct a public use cabin.

      c. **Tolovana River-Livengood Area (C-7)**

         Convert the existing Tolovana Campground to a roadside rest. Construct a campground adjacent to it or at West Fork Tolovana Recreation withdrawal. Construct interpretive exhibits and toilet facilities at Livengood, West

Fork Tolovana and Tolovana Tram. If demand warrants, locate a concessionaire lease facility in the Livengood Camp area. Nodal development plan will leave long-term option open for a concessionaire lease facility.

d. **Hess Creek Area (C-7)**

Construct a campground and a public use cabin in the Hess Creek area, and a roadside rest for truckers, tour buses and recreationists near Hess Creek.

e. **Yukon Crossing Area**

Develop Recreation Activity Plan for Yukon Crossing Area in conjunction with Yukon Crossing-Five Mile Nodal Development Plan.

Construct roadside rests, parking area, boating access, and wayside interpretive exhibits and toilet facilities.

Construct multi-agency visitor contact center overlooking the Yukon Area. Construct major campgrounds.

B. **North of the Yukon River,** plan and develop a public service site and interpretive services in cooperation with the State of Alaska and the North Slope Borough. Areas considered for development:

a. **Five Mile Area**

Develop Recreation Activity Plan for Yukon Crossing Area in conjunction with Yukon Crossing-Five Mile Nodal Development Plan. Construct and maintain litter collection facilities and interpretive exhibits in conjunction with concessionaire facilities.

b. **Ray River Crossing (B-6)**

Construct and maintain sanitation and litter facilities.

c. **Olson Lake (B-6)**

Construct and maintain sanitation and litter collection facilities. Consider providing a wildlife viewing, interpretive and photography area to allow visitors to observe waterfowl in their natural habitat.

d. **Gobblers Knob (B-5)**

Construct and maintain sanitation and litter facilities.

e. **Coldfoot Camp**

Construct and maintain sanitation and litter facilities in conjunction with concessionaire development. Consider establishment of interpretive exhibits for travelers near commercial facilities.

f. **Sagwon**

Construct and maintain sanitation and litter facilities.

g. **Oksrukyik (C-3)**

Construct and maintain sanitation and litter facilities.

h. **Atigun Pass/Chandalar Camp**

Construct and maintain sanitation facilities in conjunction with concessionaire development. Consider establishment of interpretive exhibits for travelers near commercial facilities.

Reason

Public services are needed both north and south of the Yukon River. Development must keep within present policies of the Governor of Alaska and the Secretary of the Interior.

4. Continue protection of all historical structures and objects and traditional land use sites identified by the North Slope study to protect their historical and cultural values.

Reason

Some sites, structures and objects may qualify for the National Register of Historic Places. Others may not qualify because of low national interest or newness, but still have historical values and use to local residents.

5. Leave archeological sites in the Corridor unexcavated.

Reason

This is the general procedure now in effect.

6. If necessary, excavate Mosquito Lake, Gallagher Flint Station (both C-3), those sites located at the confluence of the Jim River and Grayling Creek (both B-5), and other sites in the Corridor that are close to the Haul Road and found to have high scientific value or in danger of being destroyed.

Reason

These sites should be excavated for research or to prevent destruction.

7. Conduct a Class I and Class II inventory of the Corridor.

Reason

A Class I inventory is a literature search to collect existing information concerning cultural resources. A Class II inventory involves sampling of surface and exposed cultural resources to allow an estimate of the total cultural resources of an area. These studies are necessary to add to the knowledge of the resources which may be impacted through development or use of public land.

8. Plan activities to minimize visual changes in the characteristic landscape.

Reason

The Corridor was established as a transportation and utility corridor and visual change is unavoidable. But, the impact can be minimized with proper planning.

9. As much as possible, manage as a scenic corridor highly scenic land which can be seen from the Haul Road from the general vicinity of Cathedral Mountain (B-5) north through the Galbraith Lake area (C-4).

Reason

This highly scenic area must be protected as much as possible consistent with construction activities.

10. Plan all new activities in the area classed as VRM Class III so they will not dominate the view or appear unnatural. Land included in VRM Class III extend from Washington Creek to the Yukon River, from north of Fort Hamlin hills to just south of Prospect. There is no more VRM Class III adjacent to the Haul Road until just south of Pump Station #3. From there it extends north of Sagwon Bluffs where Federal land ends.

Reason

The activities necessary to operate and maintain the oil line and Haul Road may be modified without excessive cost to comply with VRM Class III. Gas line construction will be an intrusion, but should comply after completion.

11. Plan all new activities in VRM Class IV areas to blend into the landscape by simulating natural occurrences, where possible. Class IV land is not adjacent to the Haul Road, oil line or proposed gas line.

Reason

VRM Class IV compliance usually can be met with little cost or disruption of the Corridor's primary purpose. Communication sites might be located in these areas and constructed to comply to the class.

12. Rehabilitate visual disturbances where appropriate in VRM Class V general areas until they closely meet the scenery quality of the surrounding landscape following a rehabilitation plan. Two general areas have VRM Class V ratings: the Middle Fork of the Koyukuk River from about Sukakpak Mountain downstream to where the river leaves the Corridor southwest of Coldfoot, and the Sagavanirktok River from about three miles south of Pump Station #3 to about four miles south of Happy Valley (C-3).

Reason

These two general areas are above average in scenic value but have been degraded by visual intrusions.

13. Remove or modify intrusions where practical to make them compatible with the general VRM Class. About 30 different intrusions are identified within the Corridor.

Reason

Rehabilitation of visual intrusions is desirable where practical. Prevention is the ideal way, and study of costs and means of removing intrusions will help prevent more.

Cumulative Environmental Overview

Land

Land use decisions will preclude the proliferation of ill-conceived developments along the Haul Road, while providing land for planned development of needed facilities. Land will be retained in Federal ownership with limited development north of the Yukon River to protect the environment. Any development will cause some increase in air, water, and noise pollution in its immediate area.

Minerals

Minerals decisions will allow gravel extraction and encourage mineral exploration and development while protecting wildlife habitat and the environment. Any improvement to access routes or mineral development will cause degradation of soil, water and air, and cause short-term changes in wildlife habitats. Some critical areas—peregrine nesting sites, salmon spawning streams, mineral licks, and Dall sheep lambing areas—will be withdrawn from mineral entry.

Watershed

Watershed decisions will lessen soil erosion and water pollution by protective stipulations in use authorizations issued. Off-road vehicle use will be restricted to protect the arctic environment. Construction of facilities within floodplains will be restricted to protect property and reduce water pollution.

Forestry

Forestry decisions will allow residents to use timber products for houselogs and firewood under use authorizations written to reduce adverse impacts to the soil, water, and wildlife habitat.

Range

Range decisions do not allow use authorizations to be issued for the grazing of domestic animals in any area within the Corridor. Use of horses north of the Yukon River within the Corridor will be associated with authorized recreation uses.

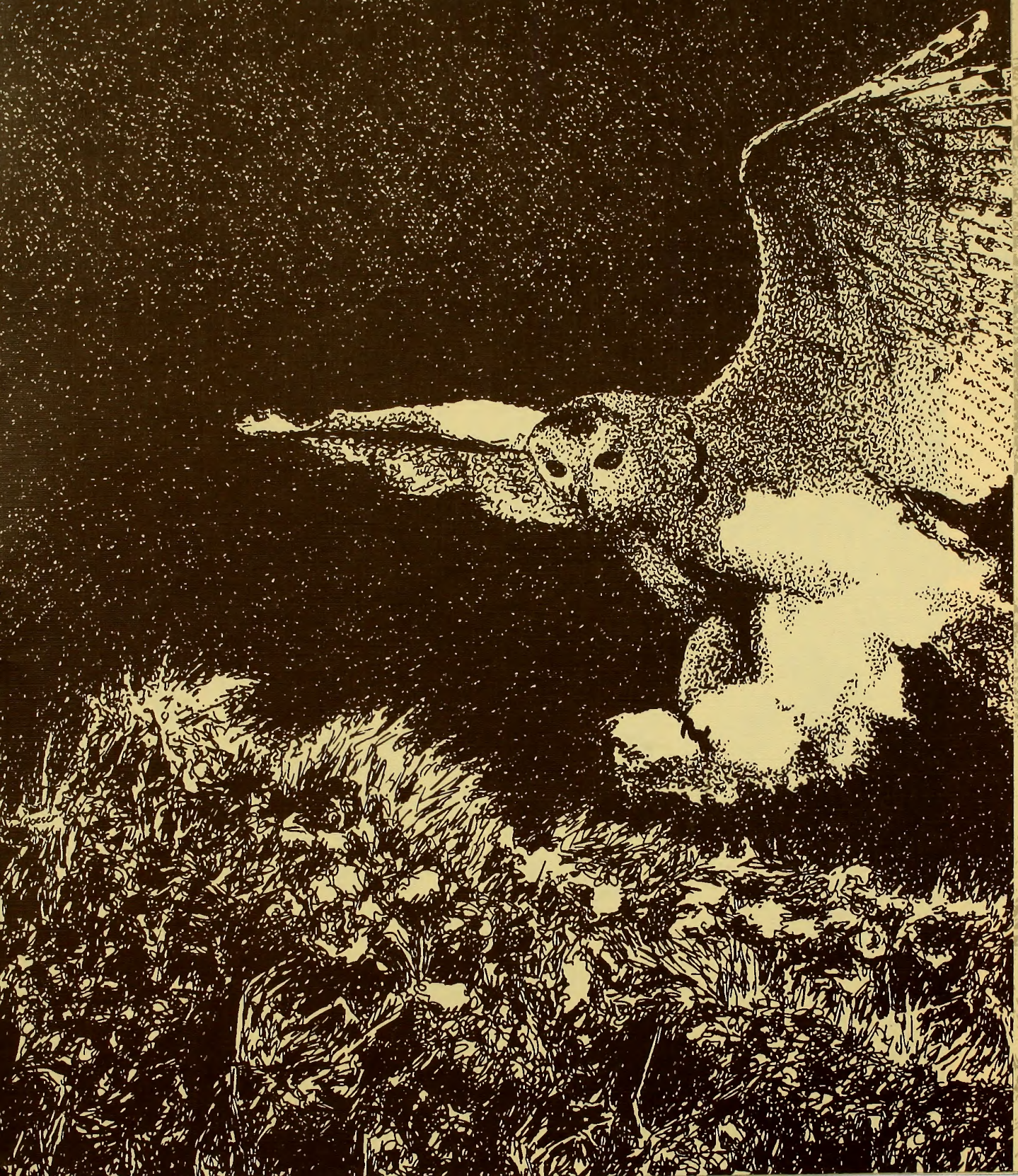
Wildlife

Wildlife decisions will protect wildlife habitat, particularly critical nesting, lambing and spawning areas, winter ranges and important migration routes. Several areas are identified as having exceptional wildlife values and other values of archeology, history, scenery, and rare plant communities. These areas will be studied further to decide the level of management needed to protect these values.

Use of fire to improve moose browse and waterfowl nesting areas will create air pollution and cause short-term impairment of habitat for most wildlife, but the long-term benefit will be improved habitat.

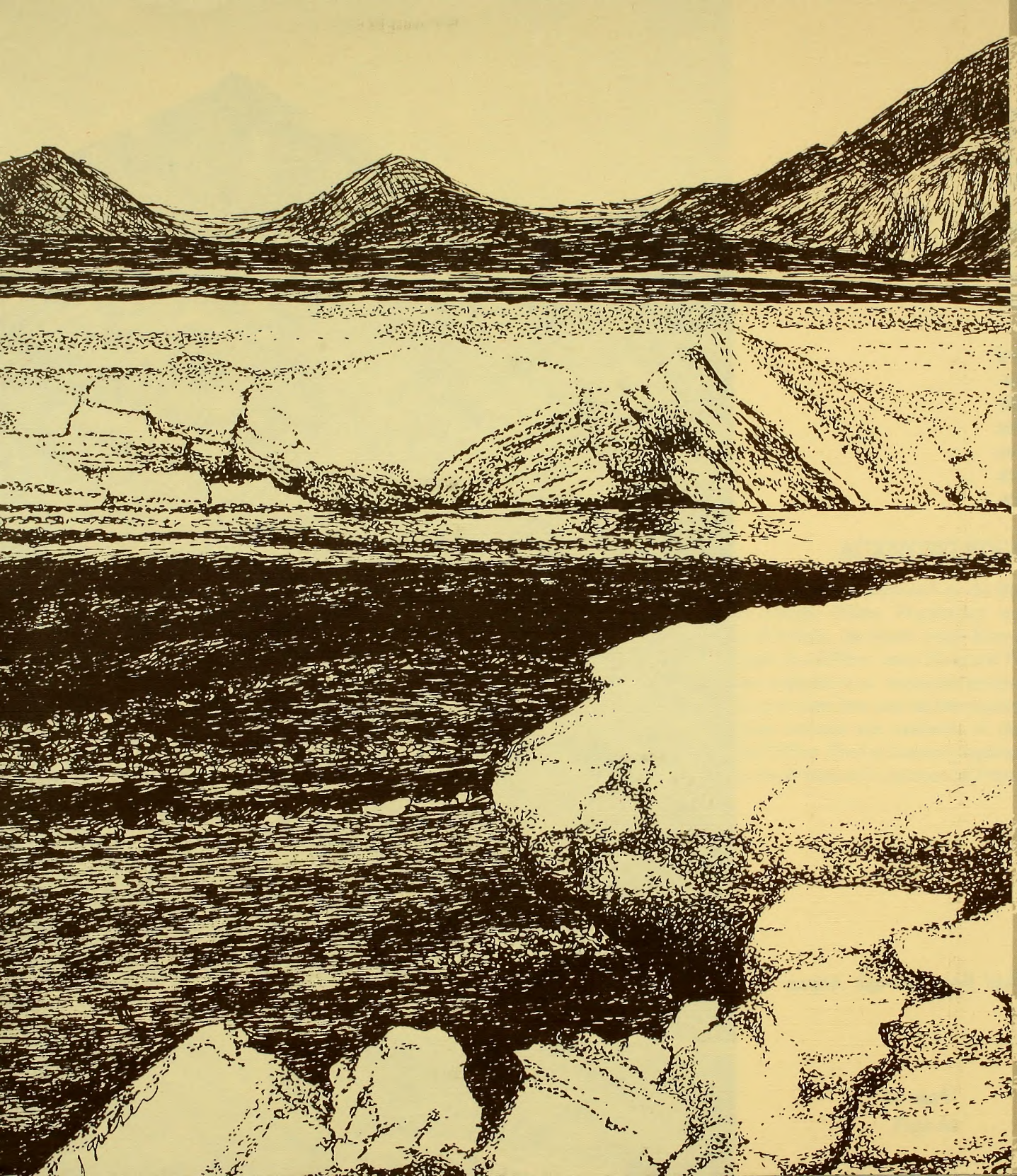
Recreation

Recreational decisions will emphasize recreation development south of the Yukon River. Development of campgrounds and related facilities will provide for expected use over the next 5-10 years. Rest stop and garbage collection facilities are needed north of the Yukon River. Human use along the road continues to grow. Some pull offs already have litter problems. Residents in surrounding villages fear any development will atrract more people to compete for the fish and game resources they depend on for subsistence. Activities will be planned to minimize visual changes in the landscape.



Interrelationship With Other Plans

This plan was developed in close cooperation with the State of Alaska, the North Slope Borough, and the Fairbanks North Star Borough, and does not conflict with their land use plans. Six coordination meetings with these local governments were held in 1978, interspersed with many letters, telephone calls, and personal contact between them and BLM to resolve apparent conflicts between proposed land uses and local governmental concerns.



Action After the Management Framework Plan

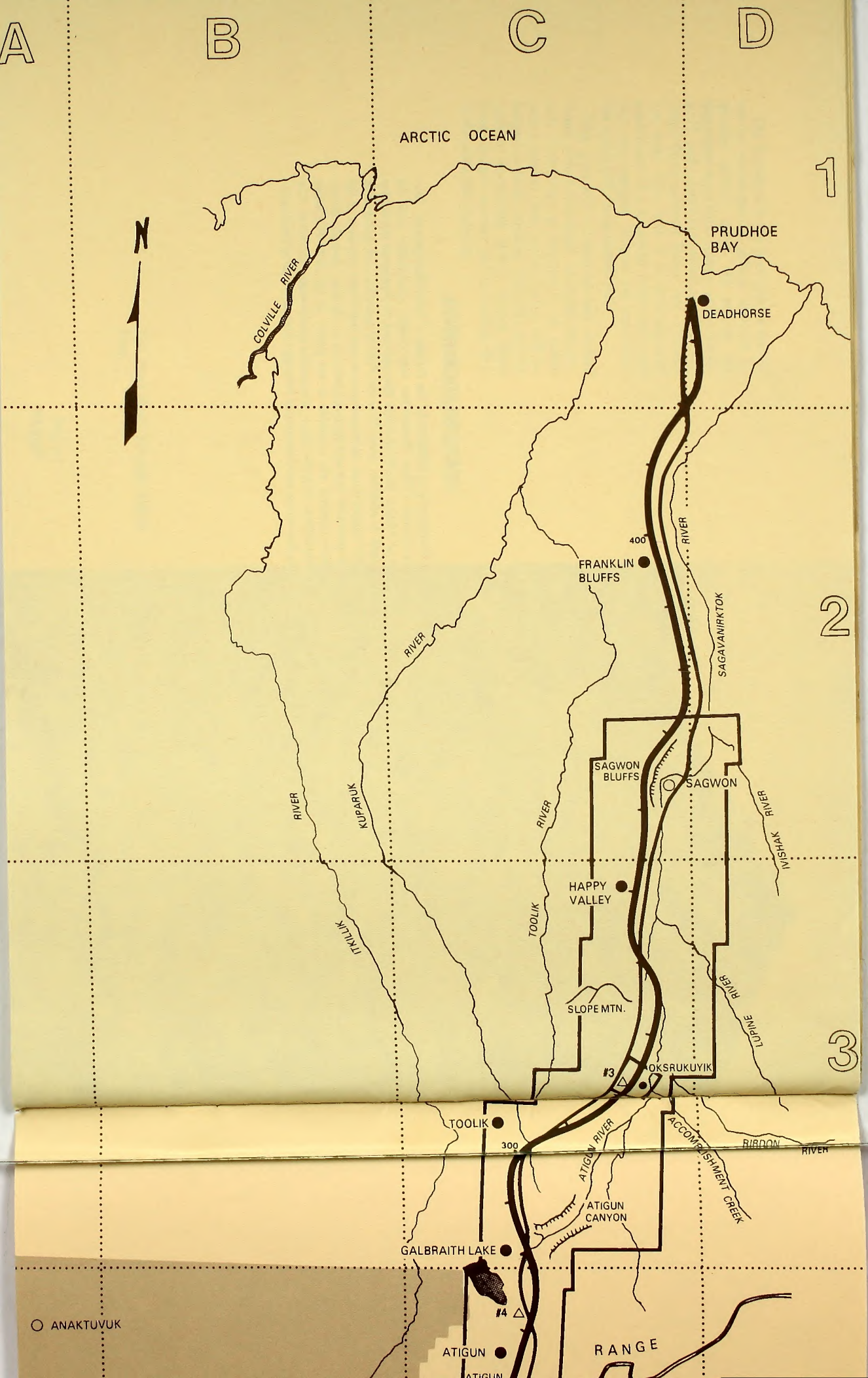
The decisions in this plan will be carried out by on-the-ground actions directed by detailed activity plans. All actions are dependent upon time, money, and available staff, and subject to provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, FLPMA and many other laws. If an environmental assessment of a proposed action indicates that unacceptable impacts are inevitable, the action will not be carried out.

This plan will be updated and revised when new information becomes known, new technology is developed, or public needs change. Any major change will be subject to public review. This plan will be used in developing BLM's Annual Work Plan, budget requests and in making day-to-day land use decisions.

The Haul Road through Atigun Pass

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document was prepared by the Bureau of Land Management, Fairbanks District Office. Preparation was closely coordinated with the State of Alaska, the North Slope Borough and the Fairbanks North Star Borough. In addition, many State and Federal agencies, civic and special interest organizations, interested groups and individuals members of the public provided data and recommendations to the plan. Specific details of these contacts are available to the public at the BLM Fairbanks District Office. Final document preparation was through contract to: The Olson Associates and Commercial Printing Company, both of Fairbanks.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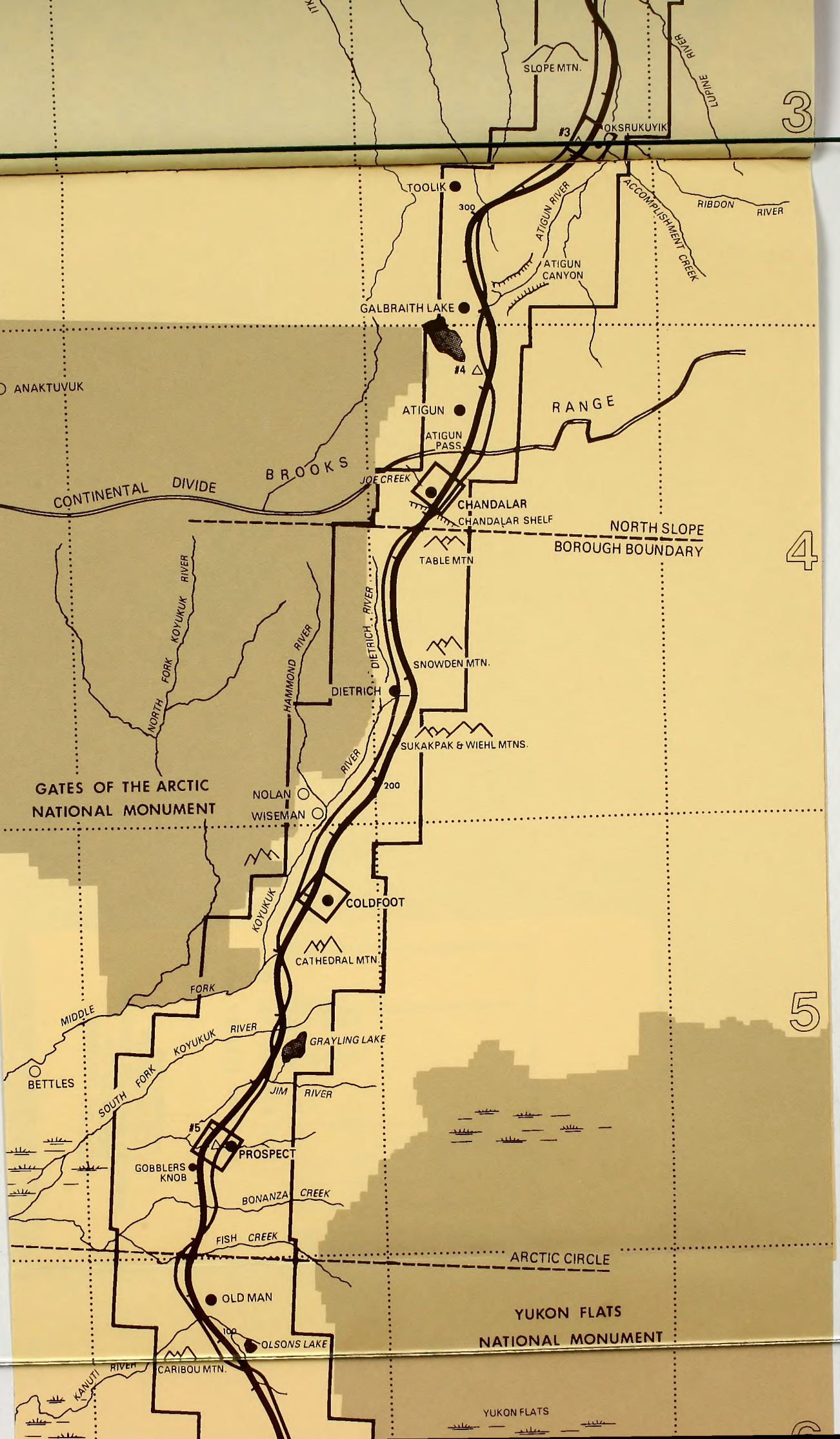
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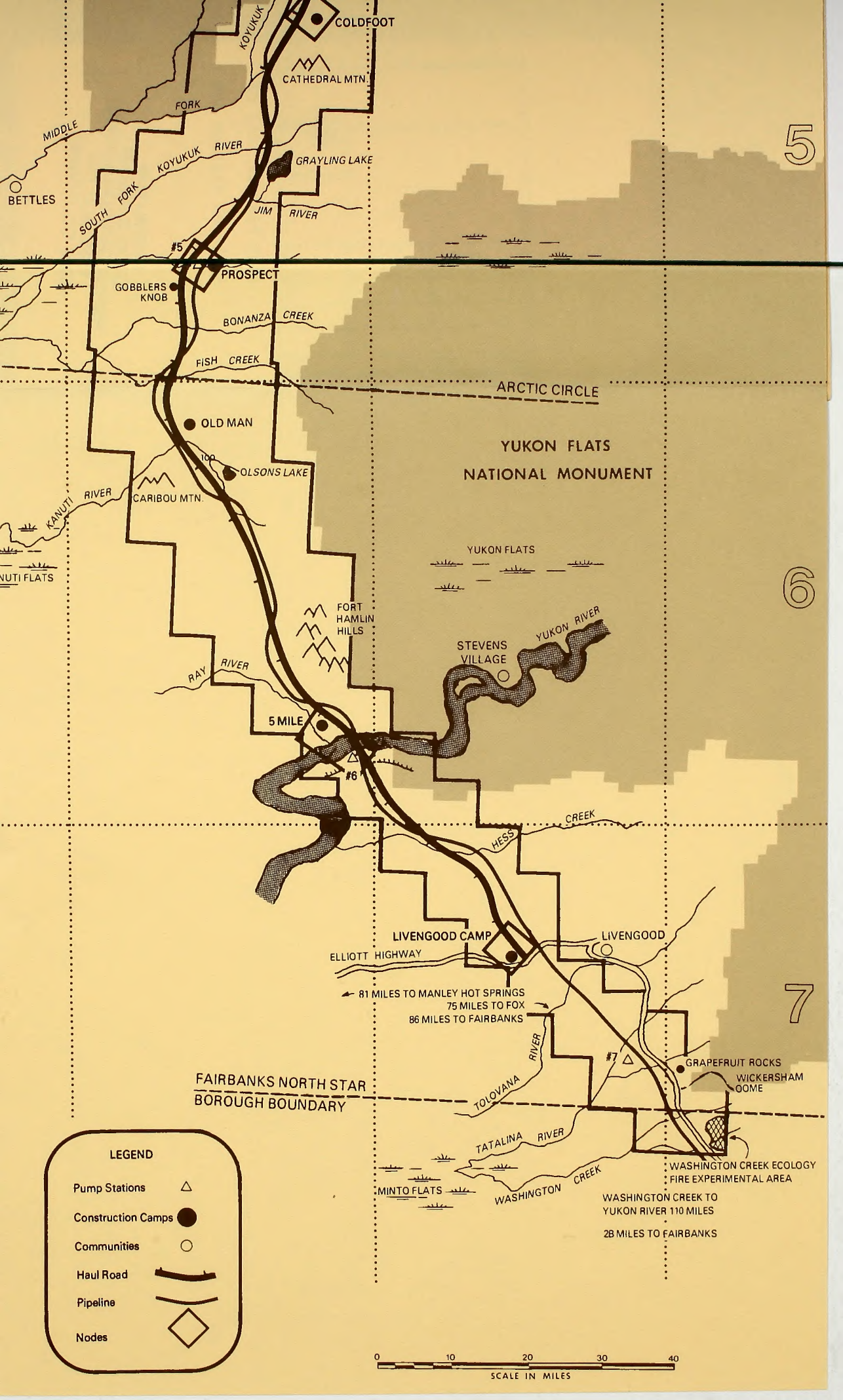
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ELLIOTT HIGHWAY
81 MILES TO MANLEY HOT SPRINGS
75 MILES TO FOX
86 MILES TO FAIRBANKS
TOLOVANA RIVER
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WICKERSHAM DOME
FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH BOUNDARY
TATALINA RIVER
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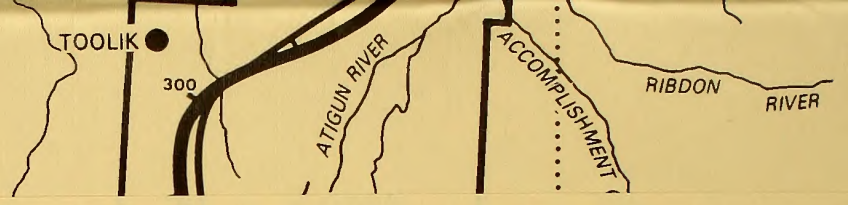
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